

SELECTED ESSAYS FROM ENGLISH  
LITERATURE

# SELECTED ESSAYS FROM ENGLISH LITERATURE

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS

BY

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LONDON

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## PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE endeavoured, in the space at my disposal, to make this selection as varied and representative as possible within the limits of the definition of the essay laid down in my introduction. That is to say, that in each essay the writer shall "lay open" himself. I have generally chosen short essays, and have preferred those that deal with life rather than with art. To enjoy and appreciate properly criticism of literature or of the other arts, some previous knowledge of the thing criticized is necessary, and boys and girls of school age are unlikely to possess such knowledge. I would have wished to include examples of the work of R. L. Stevenson and Richard Jefferies, as they are both proper to my purpose; they are omitted for reasons of copyright.

In the few brief notes I have confined myself to the explanation of such points, the immediate elucidation of which is more or less necessary for the right understanding of the text. I have not touched matters that can be easily found in any accessible dictionary or book of reference.

I have occasionally shortened an essay by omitting one or two digressions, but have in no other way interfered with the original text.

I have much pleasure in recording here my most grateful and sincere thanks to my friend Miss Dorothy Kempe for her valuable help and her suggestive criticism in the preparation of this book.

E. L.

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# SELECTED ESSAYS FROM ENGLISH LITERATURE

## INTRODUCTION

"These are fancies of my own by which I do not pretend to discover things, but to lay open myself."—MONTAIGNE.

THE word "essay"<sup>1</sup> properly means an attempt, a trial, an experiment. As applied to a form of literature the term has come to mean a short or moderately long discursive composition concerned with one particular subject, of which it only presents, however, certain aspects. An essay is never exhaustive; if it were, it would *cease to be an essay, and become a treatise*. An essay, then, does little more than suggest thoughts about a subject, and is a series of attempts upon it.<sup>2</sup> The subjects chosen by essayists are usually connected with human life, and with literature or the other arts; but the term "essay" does not imply any particular way of treating the subject, or any particular style of

<sup>1</sup> The word "essay" is derived from the Latin *exigere*, to test very exactly. It has two forms in English, *assay* and *essay*. An assay of gold is an attempt to determine accurately its character and value, and an essay of anything in human nature is to submit it to a like process in the mind.

<sup>2</sup> The first essayists, Bacon and Cowley, always wrote "essay of," never "essay on." Cf. *Essay of Truth*, *Essay of Solitude*.

writing. An essay should, however, always reflect the author's personal point of view, and reveal his attitude to life and to his fellow-men.

The essays in this volume range over many topics, and are varied in theme, in treatment, in tone, in style, but they all intentionally reflect the mind and heart and temperament of the writer.

This form of prose first appears in literature in the sixteenth century. It was the invention of a French writer, Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), who published in 1580 "Essais" in two books.<sup>1</sup> He makes himself the centre of what he has to say—"I am myself the subject of my book"—and proceeds to chat<sup>2</sup> with his readers concerning his opinions, his sympathies and antipathies, his views of men and of women, and of life in general. There is no order in his manner of writing; down his thoughts, and digressions are frequent, but every topic chosen is treated from his personal point of view, and is more or less connected with human life and with literature. And there Montaigne laid down the rule followed by essayists ever since, that in the choice and in the treatment of their subjects they must "lay open themselves."

It is almost certain that Montaigne's "Essays" were read and known in England in the original. There is evidence in his plays that Shakespeare was acquainted with them. Lord Bacon's elder brother, Anthony, spent some time at Bordeaux, and came to know Montaigne and to correspond with him. But there was

<sup>1</sup> He revised and expanded these, and added a third book in 1588.

<sup>2</sup> French *causer*.



no English translation until 1603, when John Florio (1553 ?-1625) issued his version, one of the many translations made from the French in Tudor times. Another translation, by Charles Cotton (1630-1687), superior to Florio's in style, appeared in 1685.

The great fruit of Montaigne's work in England was a little volume, published by Francis Bacon in 1597, containing ten essays. A second edition, containing thirty-eight essays, appeared in 1612, and a third, containing fifty-eight essays, in 1625. It is the last edition that is generally reprinted.

Bacon, like Montaigne before him, and like all the essayists who have followed after him, wrote down in his essays the things that interested himself. While Bacon's "Essays" are, perhaps, less personal than those of Montaigne, they are deeply coloured by Bacon's individuality, by his likes and dislikes, his views and opinions. In his dedication to Prince Henry, he wrote: "To write just treatises requireth leisure in the writer and leisure in the reader . . . which is the cause that has made me choose to write certain brief notes, set down rather significantly than curiously,<sup>1</sup> which I have called *Essays*." He is not diffuse, like Montaigne, and, indeed, gives each essay a fairly definite plan. He begins with a simple statement, such as, "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability," or, "God Almighty first planted a garden," and then proceeds to follow out the idea, giving illustrations from his own experience, or from his wide reading in history, biography, or philosophy, and ends as quietly as he

<sup>1</sup> With more care for the meaning than for the style.

began. His subjects are as varied as Montaigne's. He treats of the topics of everyday life, such as the relations between parents and children, of marriage and single life, travel, building, and gardens. He treats also of the higher influences that affect man's life, as death, religion, friendship, adversity, ambition, revenge. Many essays deal with political topics, essays which throw light on the methods of Elizabethan statesmanship.

The form became popular, and, as a contemporary of Bacon puts it, in dedicating to him a volume of "Characters upon Essays," there were "imitators of your breaking the ice to their inventions." The next English writer of note to use the essay in which to express his views was Abraham Cowley (1618-1667). In his collected works, published in 1668, appeared for the first time in one volume twelve essays on a variety of topics, written in an easy, familiar style, that much resembles the conversation of a well-bred man with his fellows. His subjects, among others, are, "Of Myself," "Of Solitude," "Of Liberty," "Of the Garden," "Of Greatness." Oddly enough, Cowley in his own day was best known for his poetry, and was a popular poet, while Milton was ignored. But Cowley's verse is now forgotten, and it is his prose that gives him his place in English literature.

A fresh departure in essay-writing was made by Richard Steele and Joseph Addison in the eighteenth century, in the publications known as the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*. In their essays Steele and Addison dealt with the "more immediate and passing scenes of life," with "temporary and local matters." These essays

did not, like their forerunners, appear altogether for the first time in a volume; they came out periodically: that is, in the case of the *Tatler*, three times a week, and in that of the *Spectator*, every day, each essay filling a single folio sheet, and costing one penny.

Before the *Tatler* there were only two publications that could in any way be said to belong to periodical writing, and they may have given Steele some ideas. In 1691 the first venture in what may be called popular journalism was made by John Dunton in his *Athenian Mercury*, which professed to resolve "all the most nice and curious questions proposed by the ingenious of either sex." Questions were invited and answered on all sorts of subjects, such as religion, love, literature manners, and science. Sir William Temple and Jonathan Swift were among the contributors, and Defoe and Richardson wrote verses in praise of the venture. It had a successful career of six years.

In 1704 Defoe began his *Review*. It continued until 1713, appearing for the greater part of the time three times a week. Defoe wrote it all himself. Its aim was mainly political; but it also dealt with moral and social topics, such as gambling, drunkenness, duelling, the stage, trade, and the poor. Moreover, Defoe imagined a Scandalous Club, which heard complaints and gave judgment upon them, and probably Steele took a hint for the Trumpet Club of the *Tatler*, and Addison for the Spectator Club of the *Spectator*. It was Defoe, indeed, who, at the end of the seventeenth century, discovered, what is unhappily true of the greater number of people, that they "care but for a little reading at a time," a

fact that accounts, perhaps, for the vast popularity of periodical publications.

Properly speaking, the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, which ran respectively from April, 1709, to March, 1711, and from March, 1711, to December, 1712, are the beginnings of the periodical literature which developed into the quarterly and monthly reviews and magazines and into the weekly journals of modern times. As the essays appeared at regular intervals more or less close, the author was able, if he so desired, to give continuity to his ideas, and to carry the characters of his invention over from one essay to another. Hence, in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* we grow familiar with Mr. Bickerstaff, with the *Spectator* himself, and with Sir Roger de Coverley.

There were many imitations of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, but they fell below their models, and are rarely worthy of remembrance. Dr. Johnson's *Rambler*, which appeared twice a week from March, 1750, to March, 1752, must be noted, although, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wittily said, it followed the *Spectator* as "a packhorse would do a hunter." All the essays with the exception of four were by Dr. Johnson.

Such publications as the *Adventurer*, the *World*, the *Connoisseur*, which appeared between 1752 and 1756, although possessing many of the characteristics of the *Spectator*, form a step in the evolution of periodical literature, because each had a number of contributors. Among them were Dr. Johnson, Lord Chesterfield, and Cowper, the poet, who wrote admirable prose. To the *Universal Chronicle* Dr. Johnson contributed from

1758 to 1760 a series of weekly essays called "The Idler."<sup>1</sup>

During 1760 there appeared anonymously in the *Public Ledger*, a daily paper, a series of letters purporting to be written by a Chinese visitor to London. They were published in 1762 in a volume entitled "The Citizens of the World," with the name of Oliver Goldsmith on the title-page. Goldsmith also contributed to the *Bee*, a periodical that ran for a few weeks in October and November, 1759, some essays marked by his simplicity, grace, and kindly humour.<sup>2</sup>

But nothing that exactly rivalled the *Tatler* and *Spectator* ever appeared again in our literature. Their place was taken by the newspaper, the magazine, and the novel.

Magazines which appeared monthly came into being before the middle of the eighteenth century. The first number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* came out in 1731. Its purpose was "to give monthly a view of all the pieces of wit, humour, or intelligence daily offered to the public in the newspapers, and to join therewith some other matters of use or amusement that will be communicated to us." Several other monthly periodicals were started, among the most important of which were the *London Magazine*, to which Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey contributed, and the *Lady's Magazine*, for which Miss Mitford wrote her series of country sketches entitled "Our Village."

The early years of the nineteenth century saw a new departure again in essay-writing. In 1802 the *Edinburgh Review* was founded by Sydney Smith and his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 70.

Whig friends. The first editor was Francis Jeffrey, and, as he said, the new review stood "on two legs," its articles being both political and critical. In 1809 the Tories, led by Sir Walter Scott, started the *Quarterly Review* on similar lines, as a rival to the *Edinburgh*. The essays in those reviews were long and weighty. The essays in *Blackwood's Magazine*, familiarly called "Maga," which began its existence in 1817, were of a lighter kind, and great space was given to literary criticism. *Fraser's Magazine*, of much the same character, was begun in 1830, and the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860. Among the contributors to these magazines were Macaulay, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, R. L. Stevenson, Richard Jefferies, Froude, Pater, Leslie Stephen, and Dr. John Brown.

Some of those writers dealt exclusively in their essays with literary criticism, and those who dealt with human life introduced fresh and wider points of view. Miss Mitford brought external Nature into the essay, and treated it in a manner scarcely before attempted in prose. Her inimitable series of country sketches, entitled "Our Village," drawn from her own experiences at Three Mile Cross, the Berkshire village in which she lived, began to appear in the *Lady's Magazine*, a little-known periodical, in 1819, and soon increased its sale from 250 to 2,000 copies. They were collected in 1824, and published in five volumes. She writes a clear style, and there is a lyric quality in her prose which makes the simplest things effective. It has been well said—

Nor even there could any tell  
The country's purer charms so well  
As Mary Mitford.

While Miss Mitford described in simple fashion what she saw around her, and her delight in all she saw, bringing human beings into her pictures of Nature, and mingling with her descriptions of fields and gardens reflections on the influence of Nature on the human mind and soul, Richard Jefferies (1848-1887), in delightful essays on aspects of external Nature, had a different point of view from that of Miss Mitford. He stood, so to speak, nearer to Nature, and while he studied her as a naturalist, he interpreted her as a poet. "I seem," he writes in the "Pageant of Summer," "as if I could feel all the glowing life the sunshine gives and the south wind calls to being. The endless grass, the endless leaves, the immense strength of the oak expanding, the unalloyed joy of finch and blackbird: from all of them I receive a little. Each gives me something of the pure joy they gather for themselves. In the blackbird's melody one note is mine; in the dance of the leaf shadows the formed maze is for me, though the motion is theirs; the flowers with a thousand faces have collected the kisses of the morning. Feeling with them, I receive some, at least, of their fulness of life."

From Bacon's essay on "Gardens" to that of Jefferies on the "Pageant of Summer" is a far cry, and the two pieces of writing serve to illustrate the difference between the sixteenth century and the nineteenth in more ways than one. For in these days an author is not satisfied merely to describe what he sees or to express simply his sensations and impressions: he desires to appreciate, and to interpret what he feels. The modern essayist takes all subjects for his province:

religion, morality, politics, science, all forms of art; but the close connection between these things and man's life is never wholly ignored, and many of our contemporary essayists reach a very high level of thought and of style.

It is hoped that the selection here presented, extending as it does over nearly three centuries, may serve as an introduction to the study of one of the most attractive forms of prose writing.



## FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626).

### OF STUDIES.

(From *Essays*, 1625.)

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability.<sup>1</sup> Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament is in discourse, and for ability is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one, but the general counsels and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth, to use them too much for ornament is affectation, to make judgment only by their rules is the humour<sup>2</sup> of a scholar. They perfect Nature, and are perfected by experience. For natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them, for they teach not their own use, but that is a wisdom without them, and above them won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested—that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read,

<sup>1</sup> To make men able.

<sup>2</sup> Eccentric disposition.

but not curiously,<sup>1</sup> and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others, but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy<sup>2</sup> things. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. And therefore if a man write little he had need have a great memory; if he confer little he had need have a present wit, and if he read little he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise, poets witty,<sup>3</sup> the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep, moral grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend, "Abeunt studia in mores."<sup>4</sup> Nay, there is no stond<sup>5</sup> nor impediment in the wit<sup>6</sup> but may be wrought out by fit studies, like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics, for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are *cymini sectores*;<sup>7</sup> if he be not apt to beat over matters and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases, so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

<sup>1</sup> With great care.

<sup>2</sup> Unsound. Cf. Milton, "Lycidas," 123, "flashy songs."

<sup>3</sup> Full of happy thoughts.

<sup>4</sup> One's studies become at last a part of one's nature (Ovid).

<sup>5</sup> Obstacle.

<sup>6</sup> Understanding.

<sup>7</sup> Dividers of cummin seed, the smallest of seeds.

## OF FRIENDSHIP.

(From *Essays*, 1625.)

It had been hard for him<sup>1</sup> that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words than in that speech, "Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a God;" for it is most true that a natural and secret hatred and aversion<sup>2</sup> towards society in any man hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue that it should have any character at all of the divine nature, except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self for a higher conversation; such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen, as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana; and truly and really in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the Church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth; for a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little "*Magna civitas, magna solitudo*," because in a great town friends are scattered, so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighbourhoods. But we may go further and affirm most truly that it is a mere<sup>3</sup> and miserable solitude to want true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness. And even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stop-

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle. Cf. "*Ethics*," 8 and 9.<sup>2</sup> Aversion.<sup>3</sup> Entire.

pings and suffocations are the most dangerous in the body, and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take saiza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flour of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain, but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend, to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship whereof we speak; so great as they purchase it many times at the hazard of their own safety and greatness. For princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit except, to make themselves capable thereof, they raise some persons to be, as it were, companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience.<sup>1</sup> The modern languages give unto such persons the name of favourites or privadoes, as if it were matter of grace or conversation; but the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them "*participes curarum*,"<sup>2</sup> for it is that which tieth the knot. And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned, who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants, whom both themselves have called friends and allowed others likewise to call them in the same manner, using the word which is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey, after surnamed the Great, to that height that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's over-match; for when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his against the pursuit of Sylla, and that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet, for that more men adored the sun rising

<sup>1</sup> Turns out to be inconvenient.

<sup>2</sup> Partners in cares.

than the sun setting. With Julius Cæsar Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest as he set him down in his testament for heir in remainder after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with him to draw him forth to his death; for when Cæsar would have discharged the senate in regard of some ill presages, and especially a dream of Calpurnia, this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him, "He hoped he would not dismiss the senate till his wife had dreamed a better dream." And it seemeth his favour was so great as Antonius, in a letter which is recited verbatim in one of Cicero's Philippics, calleth him "venefica" (witch), as if he had enchanted Cæsar. Augustus raised Agrippa, though of mean birth, to that height as when he consulted with Mæcenas about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Mæcenas took the liberty to tell him, "That he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa or take away his life; there was no third way, he had made him so great." With Tiberius Cæsar Sejanus had ascended to that height as they two were termed and reckoned as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him saith: "Hæc pro amicitia nostra non occultavi;"<sup>1</sup> and the whole senate dedicated an altar to friendship as to a goddess in respect of the great dearness of friendship between them two. The like or more was between Septimus Severus and Plautianus, for he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus, and would often maintain Plautianus in doing affronts to his son; and did write also in a letter to the senate by these words: "I love the man so well as I wish he may over-live me." Now, if these princes had been as a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity, though as great as ever happened to mortal men, but as a half-

<sup>1</sup> In consideration of our friendship I have not hidden these thoughts.

piece,<sup>1</sup> except they might have a friend to make it entire; and which is more, they were princes which had wives, sons, yet, nephews, and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten what Comminius<sup>2</sup> observeth of his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy, namely, "That he would communicate his secrets with none, and least of all those secrets which troubled him most." Whereupon he goeth on, and saith, "that towards his latter time that closeness did impair, and a little perish his understanding." Surely Comminius might have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master, Louis XI., whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark but true: "*Cor ne edito*" (eat not the heart). Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own hearts. But one thing is most admirable, (wherewith I will conclude this first-fruit of friendship) which is, that this communicating of a man's self to his friend works two contrary effects; for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves. For there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friends but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend but he grieveth the less. So that it is in truth of operation upon a man's mind of like virtue, as the alchemists used to attribute to their stone for man's body, that it worketh all contrary effects but still<sup>3</sup> to the good and benefit of nature. But yet without praying in aid of alchemists, there is a manifest image of this in the ordinary course of nature. For in bodies union strengtheneth, and cherisheth any natural action; and, on the other side, weakeneth and dulleth any violent impression; and even so it is of minds.

The second fruit of friendship is healthful and sovereign

<sup>1</sup> Half a work of art.

<sup>2</sup> Philippe de Commines, 1445-1509, the French historian.

<sup>3</sup> Always.

for the understanding, as the first is for the affections. For friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections from storm and tempests; but it maketh daylight in the understanding out of darkness and confusion of thoughts; neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel, which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that certain it is, that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another, he tosseth his thoughts more easily, he marshalleth them more orderly, he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself, and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the King of Persia, That speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad, whereby the imagery doth appear in figure,<sup>1</sup> whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs. Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel; they indeed are best, but even without that, a man learneth of himself and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a statue or picture than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother.

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point which lieth more open, and falleth within vulgar<sup>2</sup> observation, which is faithful counsel from a friend. Heraclitus saith well in one of his enigmas, "Dry light is ever the best." And certain it is, that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another is drier and purer than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment, which is ever infused and drenched in his affections and customs; so as there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a

<sup>1</sup> Full outline.

<sup>2</sup> Common.

flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self; and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts; the one concerning manners, the other concerning business. For the first, the best preservative to keep the mind in health is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling a man's self to a strict account is a medicine sometimes too piercing and corrosive. Reading good books of morality is a little flat and dead. Observing our faults in others is sometimes improper for our case; but the best receipt, best, I say to work, and best to take, is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold what gross errors and extreme absurdities many, especially of the greater sort, do commit for want of a friend to tell them of them, to the great damage both of their fame and fortune. For as St. James saith, they are as men "that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favour." As for business, a man may think if he will that two eyes see no more than one; or that a gamester seeth always more than a looker-on; or that a man in anger is as wise as he that hath said over the four-and-twenty letters; or that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm as upon a rest; and such other fond and high imaginations, to think himself all in all. But when all is done, the help of good counsel is that which setteth business straight. And if any man think that he will take counsel but it shall be by pieces, asking counsel in one business of one man, and in another business of another man, it is well, that is to say, better perhaps than if he asked none at all, but he runneth two dangers: one, that he shall not be faithfully counselled, for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given, but such as shall be bowed and crooked to some ends which he hath that giveth it. The other, that he shall have counsel given, hurtful and unsafe, though with good meaning, and mixed partly of mischief and partly of remedy; even as if you would call a physician that is thought



good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body, and therefore may put you in way for a present cure, but overthroweth your health in some other kind, and so cure the disease and kill the patient. But a friend that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate will beware by furthering any present business how he dasheth upon other inconvenience. And, therefore, rest not upon scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship, peace in the affections, and support of the judgment followeth the last fruit, which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid, and bearing a part in all actions and occasions. Here the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship is to cast<sup>1</sup> and see how many things there are which a man cannot do himself; and then it will appear that it was a sparing speech of the ancients to say, "That a friend is another himself, for that a friend is far more than himself." Men have their time, and die many times in desire of some things which they principally take to heart; the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him. So that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place; but where friendship is, all offices of life are, as it were, granted to him and his deputy, for he may exercise them by his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot with any face or comeliness say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate or beg, and a number of the like. But all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. So again, a man's person hath many proper relations which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son, but as a father;

<sup>1</sup> Reckon.

to his wife, but as a husband; to his enemy, but upon terms; whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person. But to enumerate these things were endless. I have given a rule where a man cannot fitly play his own part; if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

## OF GARDENS.

(From *Essays*, 1625.)

God Almighty first planted a garden, and, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment of the spirits of man, without which buildings and palaces are but gross handiworks; and a man shall ever see that when ages grow to civility<sup>1</sup> and elegance, men come to build stately sooner than to garden finely, as if gardening were the greater perfection. I do hold it, in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months in the year, in which severally things of beauty may be then in season. For December and January, and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter: holly, ivy, bays, juniper, cypress trees, yew, pine-apple trees, fir trees, rosemary, lavender, periwinkle (the white, the purple, and the blue), germander, flags, orange trees, lemon trees, and myrtles (if they be stoved), and sweet marjoram, warm set. There followeth for the latter part of January and February the mezereum tree, which then blossoms; crocus vernus (both the yellow and the grey); primroses, anemones, the early tulip, hyacinthus orientalis, chamaïris, fritillaria. For March there come violets, especially the single blue, which are the earliest, the yellow daffodil, the daisy, the almond tree in blossom, the peach tree in blossom, the cornelian tree in blossom, sweet-brier. In April follow the double white violet, the

<sup>1</sup> Civilization.

wallflower, the stock-gilliflower, the cowslip, flower-de-luces, and lilies of all natures, rosemary-flowers, the tulip, the double peony, the pale daffodil, the French honeysuckle, the cherry tree in blossom, the damascene and plum trees in blossom, the whitethorn in leaf, the lilac tree. In May and June come pinks of all sorts, especially the blush pink; roses of all kinds except the musk, which comes later, honeysuckles, strawberries, bugloss, columbine, the French marigold, flos Africanus, cherry-tree in fruit, ribes, figs in fruit, rasps, vine-flowers, lavender in flowers, the sweet satyrian with the white flower; herba muscaria, lilium convallium, the apple tree in blossom. In July come gilliflowers of all varieties, musk roses, the lime tree in blossom, early pears and plums in fruit, genitings, codlings. In August come plums of all sort in fruit, pears, apricots, berries, filberts, musk melons, monkshoods of all colours. In September come grapes, apples, poppies of all colours, peaches, melo-cotones, nectarines, cornelians, wardens, quinces. In October and the beginning of November, come services, medlars, bullaces, roses cut or removed to come late, hollyoaks, and such like. These particulars are for the climate of London; but my meaning is perceived that you may have *ver perpetuum* as the place affords.

And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air, where it comes and goes like the warbling of music, than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells; so that you may walk by a whole row of them, and find nothing of their sweetness; yea, though it be in a morning's dew. Bays likewise yield no smell as they grow; rosemary little, nor sweet marjoram. That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air is the violet, especially the white double violet, which comes twice a year, about the middle of April, and about Bartholomewtide; next to that is the musk rose; then the strawberry leaves dying

with a most excellent cordial smell; then the flower of the vines—it is a little dust, like the dust of a bent which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth; then sweet-brier; then wallflowers, which are very delightful to be set under a parlour, or lower chamber window; then pinks and gilliflowers, especially the matted pink and clove-gilliflower; then the flowers of the lime tree; then the honeysuckles, so they be somewhat afar off. Of bean flowers I speak not because they are field flowers; but those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three—that is, burnet, wild thyme, and water mints; therefore you are to set whole alleys of them to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.

For gardens, speaking of those which are indeed princelike, as we have done of buildings, the contents ought not well to be under thirty acres of ground, and to be divided into three parts: a green in the entrance, a heath or desert in the going forth, and the main garden in the midst, besides alleys on both sides. And I like well that four acres of ground be assigned to the green, six to the heath, four and four to either side, and twelve to the main garden. The green hath two pleasures; the one, because nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair alley in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a stately hedge which is to enclose the garden. But because the alley will be long, and in great heat of the year or day, you ought not to buy the shade in the garden by going in the sun through the green; therefore you are of either side of the green to plant a covert alley upon carpenters' work, about twelve feet in height, by which you may go in shade into the garden. As for the making of knots or figures with divers coloured earths, that they may lie under the windows of the house on that side which the garden stands, they be but toys, you may see as good sights many times in farts. The garden is best to be square, encompassed on all the four sides with a stately

arched hedge, the arches to be upon pillars of carpenters' work of some ten feet high, and six feet broad, and the spaces between of the same dimension with the breadth of the arch. Over the arches let there be an entire edge of some four feet high, framed also upon carpenters' work; and upon the upper hedge, over every arch a little turret, with a belly enough to receive a cage of birds, and over every space between the arches some other little figure, with broad plates of round coloured glass, gilt for the sun to play upon; but this hedge I intend to be raised upon a bank, not steep, but gently slope of some six feet, set all with flowers. Also I understand that this square of the garden should not be the whole breadth of the ground, but to leave on either side ground enough for diversity of side alleys, unto which the two covert alleys of the green may deliver you; but there must be no alleys with hedges at either end of this great enclosure; not at the hither end for letting<sup>1</sup> your prospect upon the fair hedge from the green; nor at the further end for letting your prospect from the hedge through the arches upon the heath.

For the ordering of the ground within the great hedge, I leave it to variety or device, advising, nevertheless, that whatsoever form you cast it into, first it be not too busy or full of work, wherein I, for my part, do not like images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff—they be for children. Little low hedges round like welts, with some pretty pyramids, I like well, and in some places, fair columns upon frames of carpenters' work. I would also have the alleys spacious and fair. You may have closer alleys upon the side grounds, but none in the main garden. I wish also, in the very middle, a fair mount, with three ascents and alleys, enough for four to walk abreast, which I would have to be perfect circles without any bulwarks or embossments, and the whole amount to be thirty feet high; and some fine banqueting house, with some chimneys neatly cast, and without too much glass.

<sup>1</sup> Hindering.

For fountains, they are a great beauty and refreshment, but pools mar all, and make the garden unwholesome, and full of flies and frogs. Fountains I intend to be of two natures: the one that sprinkleth or spouteth water, the other a fair receipt<sup>1</sup> of water of some thirty or forty feet square, but without fish, or slime, or mud. For the first the ornaments of images gilt, or of marble, which are in use do well; but the main matter is so to convey the water as it never stay either in the bowls, or in the cistern, that the water be never by rest discoloured green or red, or the like, or gather any mossiness or putrefaction. Besides that, it is to be cleansed every day by the hand; also some steps up to it, and some fine pavement about it doth well. As for the other kind of fountain, which we may call a bathing pool, it may admit much curiosity and beauty, wherewith we will not trouble ourselves; as that the bottom be finely paved, and with images, the sides likewise, and withal embellished with coloured glass, and such things of lustre, encompassed also with fine rails of low statues. But the main point is the same which we mentioned in the former kind of fountain—which is, that the water be in perpetual motion, fed by a water higher than the pool, and delivered into it by fair spouts, and then discharged away underground by some equality of bores that it stay little. And for fine devices of arching water without spilling, and making it rise in several forms, of feathers, drinking glasses, canopies, and the like, they be pretty things to look on, but nothing to health and sweetness.

For the heath, which was the third part of our plot, I wish it to be framed as much as may be to a natural wildness. Trees, I would have none in it, but some thickets made only of sweet-brier and honeysuckle, and some wild vine amongst, and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses; for these are sweet and prosper in the shade; and these to be in the heath here and there not in any order. I like also little heaps in the nature of molehills, such as are in

<sup>1</sup> Receptacle.

wild heaths, to be set, some with wild thyme, some with pinks, some with germander, that gives a good flower to the eye, some with periwinkle, some with violets, some with strawberries, some with cowslips, some with daisies, some with red roses, some with *lilium convallium*, some with sweet williams (red), some with bear's-foot, and the like low flowers, being withal sweet and sightly. Part of which heaps to be with standards of little bushes, pricked upon their top, and part without. The standards to be roses, juniper, holly, berberries, but here and there, because of the smell of their blossom, red currants, gooseberries, rosemary, bays, sweet-brier, and such like; but these standards to be kept with cutting that they grow not out of course.<sup>1</sup>

For the side grounds, you are to fill them with variety of alleys, private, to give a full shade, some of them, where-soever the sun be. You are to frame some of them likewise for shelter, that when the wind blows sharp you may walk as in a gallery. And those alleys must be likewise hedged at both ends to keep out the wind, and these closer alleys must be ever finely gravelled, and no grass, because of going<sup>2</sup> wet. In many of these alleys likewise you are to set fruit trees of all sorts, as well upon the walls as in ranges. And this would be generally observed, that the borders wherein you plant your fruit trees be fair and large, and low, and not steep; and set with fine flowers, but thin and sparingly, lest they deceive the trees.<sup>3</sup> At the end of both the side grounds I would have a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall of the enclosure breast high to look abroad into the fields.

For the main garden I do not deny but there should be some fair alleys, ranged on both sides with fruit trees, and some pretty tufts of fruit trees, and arbours with seats set in some decent order; but these to be by no means set too thick, but to leave the main garden so as it be not close, but the air open and free. For as for shade, I would have you

<sup>1</sup> Bounds.

<sup>2</sup> Walking in the.

<sup>3</sup> Cheat the trees of their nutriment.

rest<sup>1</sup> upon the alleys of the side grounds, there to walk if you be disposed in the heat of the year or day; but to make account that the main garden is for the more temperate parts of the year, and in the heat of summer for the morning and the evening or overcast days.

For aviaries, I like them not, except they be of that largeness as they may be turfed, and have living plants and bushes set in them, that the birds may have more scope and natural nestling, and that no foulness appear in the floor of the aviary.

So I have made a platform of a princely garden, partly by precept, partly by drawing; not a model, but some general lines of it, and in this I have spared no cost. But it is nothing for great princes, that for the most part taking advice with workmen, with no less cost set their things together, and sometimes add statues and such things for state and magnificence, but nothing to the true pleasure of a garden.

## OF PLANTATIONS.<sup>2</sup>

(From *Essays*, 1625.)

Plantations are amongst ancient, primitive, and heroical works. When the world was young it begat more children, but now it is old it begets fewer, for I may justly account new plantations to be the children of former kingdoms. I like a plantation in a pure soil—that is, where people are not displanted to the end to plant in others; for else it is rather an extirpation than a plantation. Planting of countries is like planting of woods, for you must make account to lose almost twenty years' profit, and expect your recompense in the end; for the principal thing that hath been the destruction of most plantations hath been the base and hasty drawing of profit in the first years. It is true, speedy

<sup>1</sup> Depend.

<sup>2</sup> Colonies.



profit is not to be neglected, as far as may stand with the good of the plantation, but no farther. It is a shameful and unblest thing to take the scum of people and wicked condemned men to be the people with whom you plant, and not only so, but it spoileth the plantation, for they will ever live like rogues, and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do mischief, and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country, to the discredit of the plantation. The people wherewith you plant ought to be gardeners, ploughmen, labourers, smiths, carpenters, joiners, fishermen, fowlers, with some few apothecaries, surgeons, cooks, and bakers. In a country of plantation, first look about what kind of victual the country yields of itself to hand—as chestnuts, walnuts, pine-apples, olives, dates, plums, cherries, wild honey, and the like, and make use of them. Then consider what victual or esculent things there are which grow speedily and within the year—as parsnips, carrots, turnips, onions, radishes, artichokes of Jerusalem, maize, and the like. For wheat, barley, and oats, they ask too much labour, but with peas and beans you may begin, both because they ask less labour, and because they serve for meat as well as for bread. And of rice likewise cometh a great increase, and it is a kind of meat. Above all, there ought to be brought store of biscuit, oatmeal, flour, meal, and the like in the beginning, till bread may be had. For beasts or birds take chiefly such as are least subject to diseases and multiply fastest—as swine, goats, cocks, hens, turkeys, geese, house-doves, and the like. The victual in plantations ought to be expended almost as in a besieged town—that is, with certain<sup>1</sup> allowance. And let the main part of the ground employed to gardens or corn be to a common stock, and to be laid in and stored up, and then delivered out in proportion; besides some spots of ground that any particular person will manure for his own private purpose. Consider likewise what commodities the soil where the plantation is doth

<sup>1</sup> Fixed.

naturally yield, that they may some way help to defray the charge of the plantation, so it be not as was said to the untimely prejudice of the main business, as it hath fared with tobacco in Virginia. Wood commonly aboundeth but too much, and therefore timber is fit to be one. If there be iron ore and streams whereupon to set the mills, iron is a brave commodity where wood aboundeth. Making of bay-salt, if the climate be proper for it, would be put in experience. Growing<sup>1</sup> silk likewise, if any be, is a likely commodity. Pitch and tar, where store of firs and pines are, will not fail. So drugs and sweet woods, where they are, cannot but yield great profit; soap-ashes, like-wise, and other things that may be thought of. But moil not too much under ground, for the hope of mines is very uncertain, and useth to make<sup>2</sup> the planters lazy in other things. For government let it be in the hands of one assisted with some counsel, and let them have commission to exercise martial laws with some limitation. And above all, let men make that profit of being in the wilderness as they have God always and His service before their eyes. Let not the government of the plantation depend upon too many counselors and undertakers in the country that planteth, but upon a temperate number, and let those be rather noblemen and gentlemen than merchants, for they look ever to the present<sup>3</sup> gain. Let there be freedoms from custom till the plantation be of strength, and not only freedom from custom, but freedom to carry their commodities where they may make their best of them, except there be some special cause of caution. Cram not in people by sending too fast company after company, but rather hearken how they waste, and send supplies proportionably; but so as the number may live well in the plantation, and not by surcharge be in penury. It hath been a great endangering to the health of some plantations that they have built along the sea and rivers in marsh and

<sup>1</sup> Vegetable.

<sup>3</sup> Immediate.

<sup>2</sup> Usually makes.

unwholesome grounds. Therefore, though you begin there to avoid carriage and other like discommodities,<sup>1</sup> yet build still rather upwards from the streams than along. It concerneth likewise the health of the plantation that they have good store of salt with them, that they may use it in their victuals when it shall be necessary. If you plant where savages are, do not only entertain them with trifles and gingles,<sup>2</sup> but use them justly and graciously, with sufficient guard nevertheless, and do not win their favour by helping them to invade their enemies, but for their defence it is not amiss. And send oft of them over to the country that plants, that they may see better condition than their own, and commend it when they return. When the plantation grows to strength, then it is time to plant with women as well as men, that the plantation may spread into generations, and not be ever pieced from without. It is the sinfullest thing in the world to forsake or destitute<sup>3</sup> a plantation once in forwardness, for, besides the dishonour, it is the guiltiness of blood of many commiserable persons.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Inconveniences.

<sup>3</sup> Abandon.

<sup>2</sup> Rattles.

<sup>4</sup> Persons to be pitied.

# ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618-1667).

## OF MYSELF

(*Iron Lines*, first published, 1668.)

It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself; it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise for him; There is no danger from me of offending him in this kind; neither my mind, nor my body, nor my fortune allow me any materials for that vanity. It is sufficient for my own contentment that they have preserved me from being scandalous, or remarkable on the defective side. But besides that, I shall here speak of myself only in relation to the subject of these precedent discourses, and shall be likelier thereby to fall into the contempt than rise up to the estimation of most people. As far as my memory can return back into my past life, before I knew or was capable of guessing what the world, or glories, or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave me a secret bent of aversion from them, as some plants are said to turn away from others, by an antipathy imperceptible to themselves and inscrutable to man's understanding. Even when I was a very young boy at school, instead of running about on holidays and playing with my fellows, I was wont to steal from them and walk into the fields, either alone with a book, or with some one companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then, too, so much an enemy to all constraint,

that my masters could never prevail on me, by any persuasions or encouragements, to learn without book the common rules of grammar, in which they dispensed with me alone, because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercises out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now (which I confess I wonder at myself) may appear by the latter end of an ode which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other verses. The beginning of it is boyish, but of this part which I here set down, if a very little were corrected, I should hardly now be much ashamed.

## IX.

This only grant me, that my means may lie  
 Too low for envy, for contempt too high.  
 Some honour I would have,  
 Not from great deeds, but good alone.  
 The unknown are better than ill known.  
 Rumour can ope the grave ;  
 Acquaintance I would have, but when it depends  
 Not on the number, but the choice of friends.

## X.

Books should, not business, entertain the light,  
 And sleep, as undisturbed as death, the night.  
 My house a cottage, more  
 Than palace, and should fitting be  
 For all my use, no luxury  
 My garden painted o'er  
 With Nature's hand, not Art's ; and pleasures yield,  
 Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

## XI.

Thus would I double my life's fading space,  
 For he that runs it well twice runs his race.  
 And in this true delight,  
 These unbought sports, this happy state,  
 I would not fear, nor wish my fate,  
 But boldly say each night,  
 To-morrow let my sun his beams display  
 Or in clouds hide them—I have lived to-day.

You may see by it I was even then acquainted with the poets (for the conclusion is taken out of Horace), and

perhaps it was the immature and immoderate love of them which stamped first, or rather engraved, these characters in me. They were like letters cut into the bark of a young tree, which with the tree still grow proportionably. But how this love came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular little chance that filled my head first with such chimes of verse as have never since left ringing there. For I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlour (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion), but there was wont to lie Spenser's works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses, which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had little to do with all this); and by degrees with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet. With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the university, but was soon torn from thence by that violent public storm which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every plant, even from the princely cedars to me, the hyssop.<sup>1</sup> Yet I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest; for I was cast by it into the family of one of the best persons, and into the court of one of the best princesses of the world. Now though I was here engaged in ways most contrary to the original design of my life, that is, into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant, for that was the state then of the English and French Courts; yet all this was so far from altering my opinion, that it only added the confirmation of reason to that which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life,

<sup>1</sup> The war between Charles I. and his Parliament, 1642-1648.

the nearer I came to it; and that beauty which I did not fall in love with when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me when I saw that it was adulterate. I met with several great persons, whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired, no more than I would be glad or content to be in a storm, though I saw many ships which rid safely and bravely in it. A storm would not agree with my stomach, if it did with my courage. Though I was in a crowd of as good company as could be found anywhere, though I was in business of great and honourable trust, though I ate at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistence that ought to be desired by a man of my condition in banishment and public distresses, yet I could not abstain from renewing my old schoolboy's wish in a copy of verses to the same effect.

Well then; I now do plainly see,  
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree, etc.

And I never then proposed to myself any other advantage from His Majesty's happy restoration, but the getting into some moderately convenient retreat in the country, which I thought in that case I might easily have encompassed, as well as some others, with no greater probabilities or pretences have arrived to extraordinary fortunes. But I had before written a shrewd prophecy against myself, and I think Apollo inspired me in the truth, though not in the elegance of it.

Thou, neither great at court nor in the war,  
Nor at th' exchange shalt be, nor at the wrangling bar;  
Content thyself with the small barren praise,  
Which neglected verse does raise, etc.

However, by the failing of the forces which I had expected, I did not quit the design which I had resolved on; I cast myself into it *A corps perdu*, without making capitulations or taking counsel of fortune. But God laughs at a man who

says to his soul, "Take thy ease": I met presently not only with many little encumbrances and impediments, but with so much sickness (a new misfortune to me) as would have spoiled the happiness of an emperor as well as mine. Yet I do neither repent nor alter my course.

## OF SOLITUDE.

(From *Essays*, first published, 1668.)

"*Nurquam minus solus, quam cum solus,*"<sup>1</sup> is now become a very vulgar saying. Every man and almost every boy for these seventeen hundred years has had it in his mouth. But it was at first spoken by the excellent Scipio, who was without question a most worthy, most happy, and the greatest of all mankind. His meaning no doubt was this: that he found more satisfaction to his mind, and more improvement of it by solitude than by company; and to show that he spoke not this loosely or out of vanity, after he had made Rome mistress of almost the whole world, he retired himself from it by a voluntary exile, and at a private house in the middle of a wood near Linternum passed the remainder of his glorious life no less gloriously. This house Seneca went to see so long after with great veneration, and, among other things, describes his bath to have been of so mean a structure, that now, says he, the basest of the people would despise them, and cry out, "Poor Scipio understood not how to live." What an authority is here for the credit of retreat! and how happy had it been for Hannibal if adversity could have taught him as much wisdom as was learnt by Scipio from the highest prosperities. This would be no wonder if it were as truly as it is colourably and wittily said by Monsieur de Montaigne,<sup>2</sup> that ambition itself might teach us to love solitude: there is nothing does so much hate to have com-

<sup>1</sup> Never less alone than when alone.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, p. 2.



panions. It is true, it loves to have its elbows free, it detests to have company on either side, but it delights above all things in a train behind, aye, and ushers, too, before it. But the greater part of men are so far from the opinion of that noble Roman, that if they chance at any time to be without company they are like a becalmed ship; they never move but by the wind of other men's breath, and have no oars of their own to steer withal. It is very fantastical and contradictory in human nature, that men should love themselves above all the rest of the world, and yet never endure to be with themselves. When they are in love with a mistress, all other persons are importunate and burdensome to them. "*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam lubens*," They would live and die with her alone.

And yet our dear self is so wearisome to us that we can scarcely support its conversation for an hour together.

It is a deplorable condition this, and drives a man sometimes to pitiful shifts in seeking how to avoid himself.

The truth of the matter is, that neither he who is a fop in the world is a fit man to be alone, nor he who has set his heart much upon the world, though he has ever so much understanding; so that solitude can be well fitted and set right but upon a very few persons. They must have enough knowledge of the world to see the vanity of it, and enough virtue to despise all vanity; if the mind be possessed with any lust or passions, a man had better be in a fair than in a wood alone. They may, like petty thieves, cheat us perhaps, and pick our pockets in the midst of company, but like robbers, they use to strip and bind, or murder us when they catch us alone. This is but to retreat from men, and fall into the hands of devils. It is like the punishment of parricides among the Romans, to be sewed into a bag with an ape, a dog, and a serpent. The first work, therefore, that a man must do to make himself capable of the good of solitude is the very eradication of all lusts, for how is it possible for a man to enjoy himself while his affections are

ties to things without himself? In the second place, he must learn the art and get the habit of thinking; for this too, no less than well speaking, depends upon much practice; and cogitation is the thing which distinguishes the solitude of a god from a wild beast. Now because the soul of man is not by its own nature or observation furnished with sufficient materials to work upon; it is necessary for it to have continual resource to learning and books for fresh supplies, so that the solitary life will grow indigent, and be ready to starve without them; but if once we be thoroughly engaged in the love of letters, instead of being wearied with the length of any day, we shall only complain of the shortness of our whole life.

O life, long to the fool, short to the wise!

The First Minister of State has not so much business in public as a wise man has in private; if the one have little leisure to be alone, the other has less leisure to be in company; the one has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other all the works of God and nature under his consideration. There is no saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, "That a man does not know how to pass his time." It would have been but ill spoken by Methusalem in the nine hundred and sixty-ninth year of his life, so far it is from us, who have not time enough to attain to the utmost perfection of any part of any science, to have cause to complain that we are forced to be idle for want of work. But this you will say is work only for the learned, others are not capable either of the employments or the diversions<sup>1</sup> that arise from letters. I know they are not, and therefore cannot much recommend solitude to a man totally illiterate. But if any man be so unlearned as to want entertainment of the little intervals of accidental solitude, which frequently occur in almost all conditions (except the very meanest of the people, who have business enough in the necessary

<sup>1</sup> Recreation.

provisions for life), it is truly a great shame both to his parents and himself; for a very small portion of any ingenious art will stop up all those gaps of our time, either music, or painting, or designing, or chemistry, or history, or gardening, or twenty other things, will do it usefully and pleasantly; and if he happen to set his affections upon poetry (which I do not advise him too immoderately) that will overdo it; no wood will be thick enough to hide him from the importunities of company or business, which would abstract him from his beloved.

## RICHARD STEELE (1672-1729).

### RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

(From *The Tatler*, No. 181, June 6, 1710.)

There are those among mankind who can enjoy no relish of their being, except the world is made acquainted with all that relates to them, and think everything lost that passes unobserved; but others find a solid delight in stealing by the crowd, and modelling their life after such a manner, as is as much above the approbation as the practice of the vulgar. Life being too short to give instances great enough of true friendship or good will, some sages have thought it pious to preserve a certain reverence for the names of their deceased friends; and have withdrawn themselves from the rest of the world at certain seasons, to commemorate in their own thoughts such of their acquaintance who have gone before them out of this life. And indeed, when we are advanced in years, there is not a more pleasing entertainment, than to recollect in a gloomy moment the many we have parted with, that have been dear and agreeable to us, and to cast a melancholy thought or two after those, with whom, perhaps, we have indulged ourselves in whole nights of mirth and jollity. With such inclinations in my heart I went to my closet yesterday in the evening, and resolved to be sorrowful; upon which occasion I could not but look with disdain upon myself, that though all the reasons which I had to lament the loss of many of my friends are now as forcible as

at the moment of their departure, yet did not my heart swell with the same sorrow which I felt at the time; but I could, without tears, reflect upon many pleasing adventures I have had with some, who have long been blended with common earth. Though it is by the benefit of nature, that length of time thus blots out the violence of afflictions; yet, with tempers too much given to pleasure, it is almost necessary to revive the old places of grief in our memory, and ponder step by step on past life, to lead the mind into that sobriety of thought which poises the heart, and makes it beat with due time, without being quickened with desire, or retarded with despair, from its proper and equal motion. When we wind up a clock that is out of order, to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately set the hand to the present instant, but we make it strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be my method this evening; and since it is that day of the year which I dedicate to the memory of such in another life as I much delighted in when living, an hour or two shall be sacred to sorrow and their memory, while I run over all the melancholy circumstances of this kind which have occurred to me in my whole life.

The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a beating the coffin, and calling Papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never

come to us again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport, which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is, that good nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since ensnared me into ten thousand calamities; and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be, that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softnesses of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

We, that are very old, are better able to remember things which befell us in our distant youth, than the passages of later days. For this reason it is, that the companions of my strong and vigorous years present themselves more immediately to me in this office of sorrow. Untimely and unhappy deaths are what we are most apt to lament; so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. Thus we groan under life, and bewail those who are relieved from it. Every object that returns to our imagination raises different passions, according to the circumstance of their departure. Who can have lived in an army, and in a serious hour reflect upon the many gay and agreeable men that might long have flourished in the arts of peace, and not join with the imprecations of the fatherless, and widows on the tyrant to whose ambition they fell sacrifice? But gallant men,

who are cut off by the sword, move rather our veneration than our pity; and we gather relief enough from their own contempt of death, to make that no evil, which was approached with so much cheerfulness, and attended with so much honour. But when we turn our thoughts from the great parts of life on such occasions, and instead of lamenting those who stood ready to give death to those from whom they had the fortune to receive it; I say, when we let our thoughts wander from such noble objects, and consider the havoc which is made among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an unmixed softness, and possesses all our souls at once.

Here (were there words to express such sentiments with proper tenderness) I should record the beauty, innocence, and untimely death, of the first object my eyes ever beheld with love. The beauteous virgin! how ignorantly did she charm, how carelessly excel? Oh death! thou hast right to the bold, to the ambitious, to the high, and to the haughty; but why this cruelty to the humble, to the meek, to the undiscerning, to the thoughtless? Nor age, nor business, nor distress, can erase the dear image from my imagination. In the same week I saw her dressed for a ball, and in a shroud. How ill did the habit of death become the pretty trifler? I still behold the smiling earth—— A large train of disasters were coming on to my memory, when my servant knocked at my closet-door, and interrupted me with a letter, attended with a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put on sale on Thursday next, at Garraway's coffee-house.<sup>1</sup> Upon the receipt of it, I sent for three of my friends. We are so intimate, that we can be company in whatever state of mind we meet, and can entertain each other without expecting always to rejoice. The wine we found to be generous and warming, but with such a heat as moved us rather to be cheerful than frolicsome. It revived the spirits, without firing the blood. We commended it

<sup>1</sup> In Exchange Alley, Cornhill. It was a meeting-place for merchants.

until two of the clock this morning ; and having to-day met a little before dinner, we found, that though we drank two bottles a man, we had much more reason to recollect than forget what had passed the night before.

## MR. BICKERSTAFF VISITS A FRIEND.

(From *The Tatler*, No. 95, November 17, 1709.)

There are several persons who have many pleasures and entertainments in their possession, which they do not enjoy. It is, therefore, a kind and good office to acquaint them with their own happiness, and turn their attention to such instances of their good fortune as they are apt to overlook. Persons in the married state often want such a monitor ; and pine away their days, by looking upon the same condition in anguish and murmur, which carries with it in the opinion of others a complication of all the pleasures of life, and a retreat from its inquietudes.

I am led into this thought by a visit I made an old friend, who was formerly my school-fellow. He came to town last week with his family for the winter, and yesterday morning sent me word his wife expected me to dinner. I am, as it were, at home at that house, and every member of it knows me for their well-wisher. I cannot indeed express the pleasure it is, to be met by the children with so much joy as I am when I go thither. The boys and girls strive who shall come first, when they think it is I that am knocking at the door ; and that child which loses the race to me runs back again to tell the father it is Mr. Bickerstaff. This day I was led in by a pretty girl, that we all thought must have forgotten me ; for the family has been out of town these two years. Her knowing me again was a mighty subject with us, and took up our discourse at the first entrance. After which, they began to rally me upon a thousand little stories



they heard in the country, about my marriage to one of my neighbour's daughters. Upon which the gentleman, my friend, said, "Nay, if Mr. Bickerstaff marries a child of any of his old companions, I hope mine shall have the preference; there is Mrs. Mary is now sixteen, and would make him as fine a widow as the best of them. But I know him too well; he is so enamoured with the very memory of those who flourished in our youth, that he will not so much as look upon the modern beauties. I remember, old gentleman, how often you went home in a day to refresh your countenance and dress when Teraminta reigned in your heart. As we came up in the coach, I repeated to my wife some of your verses on her." With such reflections on little passages which happened long ago, we passed our time, during a cheerful and elegant meal. After dinner, his lady left the room, as did also the children. As soon as we were alone, he took me by the hand; "Well, my good friend," says he, "I am heartily glad to see thee; I was afraid you would never have seen all the company that dined with you to-day again. Do not you think the good woman of the house a little altered since you followed her from the play-house, to find out who she was, for me?" I perceived a tear fall down his cheek as he spoke, which moved me not a little. But, to turn the discourse, I said, "She is not indeed quite that creature she was, when she returned me the letter I carried from you; and told me, 'she hoped, as I was a gentleman, I would be employed no more to trouble her, who had never offended me; but would be so much the gentleman's friend, as to dissuade him from a pursuit, which he could never succeed in.' You may remember, I thought her in earnest; and you were forced to employ your cousin Will, who made his sister get acquainted with her, for you. You cannot expect her to be for ever fifteen." "Fifteen!" replied my good friend: "Ah! you little understand, you that have lived a bachelor, how great, how exquisite a pleasure there is,

in being really beloved! It is impossible, that the most beautiful face in nature should raise in me such pleasing ideas, as when I look upon that excellent woman. That fading in her countenance is chiefly caused by her watching with me in my fever. This was followed by a fit of sickness, which had like to have carried her off last winter. I tell you sincerely, I have so many obligations to her, that I cannot, with any sort of moderation, think of her present state of health. But as to what you say of fifteen, she gives me every day pleasures beyond what I ever knew in the possession of her beauty, when I was in the vigour of youth. Every moment of her life brings me fresh instances of her complacency to my inclinations, and her prudence in regard to my fortune. Her face is to me much more beautiful than when I first saw it; there is no decay in any feature, which I cannot trace, from the very instant it was occasioned by some anxious concern for my welfare and interests. Thus, at the same time, methinks, the love I conceived towards her for what she was, is heightened by my gratitude for what she is. The love of a wife is as much above the idle passion commonly called by that name, as the loud laughter of buffoons is inferior to the elegant mirth of gentlemen. Oh! she is an inestimable jewel. In her examination of her household affairs, she shows a certain fearfulness to find a fault, which makes her servants obey her like children; and the meanest we have has an ingenuous shame for an offence, not always to be seen in children in other families. I speak freely to you, my old friend; ever since her sickness, things that gave me the quickest joy before, turn now to a certain anxiety. As the children play in the next room, I know the poor things by their steps, and am considering what they must do, should they lose their mother in their tender years. The pleasure I used to take in telling my boy stories of battles, and asking my girl questions about the disposal of her baby,<sup>1</sup> and the

<sup>1</sup> Doll.

gossiping of it,<sup>1</sup> is turned into inward reflection and melancholy."

He would have gone on in this tender way, when the good lady entered, and with an inexpressible sweetness in her countenance told us, "she had been searching her closet for something very good, to treat such an old friend as I was." Her husband's eyes sparkled with pleasure at the cheerfulness of her countenance; and I saw all his fears vanish in an instant. The lady observing something in our looks which showed we had been more serious than ordinary, and seeing her husband receive her with great concern under a forced cheerfulness, immediately guessed at what we had been talking of; and applying herself to me, said, with a smile, "Mr. Bickerstaff, do not believe a word of what he tells you; I shall still live to have you for my second, as I have often promised you, unless he takes more care of himself than he has done since his coming to town. You must know, he tells me that he finds London is a much more healthy place than the country; for he sees several of his old acquaintance and school-fellows are here, young fellows with fair full-bottomed periwigs. I could scarce keep him this morning from going out open-breasted."<sup>2</sup> My friend, who is always extremely delighted with her agreeable humour, made her sit down with us. She did it with that easiness which is peculiar to women of sense; and to keep up the good humour she had brought in with her, turned her raillery upon me. "Mr. Bickerstaff, you remember you followed me one night from the play-house; suppose you should carry me thither to-morrow night, and lead me into the front box." This put us into a long field of discourse about the beauties, who were mothers to the present, and shined in the boxes twenty years ago. I told her, "I was glad she had transferred so many of her charms, and I did not question but her eldest daughter was within half-a-year of being a toast."

<sup>1</sup> The choice of its godparents.

<sup>2</sup> With his coat unbuttoned.

We were pleasing ourselves with this fantastical preference of the young lady, when on a sudden we were alarmed with the noise of a drum, and immediately entered my little god-son to give me a point of war.<sup>1</sup> His mother, between laughing and chiding, would have put him out of the room; but I would not part with him so. I found, upon conversation with him, though he was a little noisy in his mirth, that the child had excellent parts, and was a great master of all the learning on the other side eight years old. I perceived him a very great historian in *Æsop's Fables*: but he frankly declared to me his mind, "that he did not delight in that learning, because he did not believe they were true"; for which reason I found he had very much turned his studies, for about a twelve-month past, into the lives and adventures of *Don Belianis of Greece*, *Guy of Warwick*, the *Seven Champions*, and other historians of that age. I could not but observe the satisfaction the father took in the forwardness of his son; and that these diversions might turn to some profit, I found the boy had made remarks, which might be of service to him during the course of his whole life. He would tell you the mismanagements of *John Hickathrift*, find fault with the passionate temper in *Bevis of Southampton*, and loved *Saint George* for being the champion of England; and by this means had his thoughts insensibly moulded into the notions of discretion, virtue, and honour. I was extolling his accomplishments, when the mother told me, "that the little girl who led me in this morning was in her way a better scholar than he. Betty," said she, "deals chiefly in *'airies and sprights*; and sometimes in a winter night will terrify the maids with her accounts, until they are afraid to go up to bed."

I sat with them until it was very late, sometimes in merry, sometimes in serious discourse, with this particular pleasure, which gives the only true relish to all conversation, a sense that every one of us liked each other. I went

<sup>1</sup> A strain of military music.

home, considering the different conditions of a married life and that of a bachelor; and I must confess it struck me with a secret concern, to reflect, that whenever I go off I shall leave no traces behind me. In this pensive mood I returned to my family; that is to say, to my maid, my dog, and my cat, who only can be the better or worse for what happens to me.

## MR. BICKERSTAFF VISITS A FRIEND

(Continued).

(From *The Tatler*, No. 114, December 31, 1709.)

I was walking about my chamber this morning in a very gay humour, when I saw a coach stop at my door, and a youth about fifteen alighting out of it, whom I perceived to be the eldest son of my bosom friend that I gave some account of in my paper of the seventeenth of the last month. I felt a sensible pleasure rising in me at the sight of him, my acquaintance having begun with his father when he was just such a stripling, and about that very age. When he came up to me, he took me by the hand, and burst out in tears. I was extremely moved, and immediately said, "Child, how does your father do?" He began to reply, "My mother——" but could not go on for weeping. I went down with him into the coach, and gathered out of him, that his mother was then dying, and that, while the holy man was doing the last offices to her, he had taken that time to come and call me to his father, who, he said, would certainly break his heart, if I did not go and comfort him. The child's discretion in coming to me of his own head, and the tenderness he showed for his parents, would have quite overpowered me, had I not resolved to fortify myself for the seasonable performance of those duties which I owed to my friend. As we were going, I could not but

reflect upon the character of that excellent woman, and the greatness of his grief for the loss of one who has ever been the support to him under all other afflictions. How, thought I, will he be able to bear the hour of her death, that could not, when I was lately with him, speak of a sickness, which was then past, without sorrow! We were now got pretty far into Westminster, and arrived at my friend's house. At the door of it I met Favonius, not without a secret satisfaction to find he had been there. I had formerly conversed with him at this house; and as he abounds with that sort of virtue and knowledge which makes religion beautiful, and never leads the conversation into the violence and rage of party-disputes, I listened to him with great pleasure. Our discourse chanced to be upon the subject of death, which he treated with such a strength of reason, and greatness of soul, that, instead of being terrible, it appeared to a mind rightly cultivated, altogether to be contemned, or rather to be desired. As I met him at the door, I saw in his face a certain glowing of grief and humanity, heightened with an air of fortitude and resolution, which, as I afterwards found, had such an irresistible force, as to suspend the pains of the dying, and the lamentation of the nearest friends who attended her. I went up directly to the room where she lay, and was met at the entrance by my friend, who, notwithstanding his thoughts had been composed a little before, at the sight of me turned away his face and wept. The little family of children renewed the expressions of their sorrow according to their several ages and degrees of understanding. The eldest daughter was in tears, busied in attendance upon her mother; others were kneeling about the bedside; and what troubled me most was, to see a little boy, who was too young to know the reason, weeping only because his sisters did. The only one in the room who seemed resigned and comforted was the dying person. At my approach to the bedside, she told me, with a low broken voice, "This is kindly done—take care of your friend—do

not go from him!" She had before taken leave of her husband and children, in a manner proper for so solemn a parting, and with a gracefulness peculiar to a woman of her character. My heart was torn in pieces to see the husband on one side suppressing and keeping down the swellings of his grief, for fear of disturbing her in her last moments; and the wife, even at that time, concealing the pain she endured, for fear of increasing his affliction. She kept her eyes upon him for some moments after she grew speechless, and soon after closed them for ever. In the moment of her departure, my friend, who had thus far commanded himself, gave a deep groan, and fell into a swoon by her bedside. The distraction of the children, who thought they saw both their parents expiring together, and now lying dead before them, would have melted the hardest heart; but they soon perceived their father recover, whom I helped to remove into another room, with a resolution to accompany him until the first pangs of his affliction were abated. I knew consolation would now be impertinent; and therefore contented myself to sit by him, and condole with him in silence. For I shall here use the method of an ancient author, who, in one of his epistles, relating the virtues and death of Macrinus's wife, expresses himself thus: "I shall suspend my advice to this best of friends, until he is made capable of receiving it by those three great remedies—*Necessitas ipsa, dies longa, et satietas doloris*—the necessity of submission, length of time, and satiety of grief."

In the mean time, I cannot but consider, with much commiseration, the melancholy state of one who has had such a part of himself torn from him, and which he misses in every circumstance of life. His condition is like that of one who has lately lost his right arm, and is every moment offering to help himself with it. He does not appear to himself the same person in his house, at his table, in company, or in retirement; and loses the relish of all the pleasures and diversions that were before entertaining to

him by her participation of them. The most agreeable objects recall the sorrow for her with whom he used to enjoy them. This additional satisfaction, from the taste of pleasures in the society of one we love, is admirably described in Milton, who represents Eve, though in Paradise itself, no further pleased with the beautiful objects around her, than as she sees them in company with Adam, in that passage so inexpressibly charming :

With thee conversing, I forget all time ;  
All seasons, and their change ; all please alike.  
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet  
With charm of earliest birds ; pleasant the sun,  
When first on this delightful land he spreads  
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower  
Glist'ring with dew ; fragrant the fertile earth  
After soft showers ; and sweet the coming on  
Of grateful evening mild ; the silent night,  
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,  
And thee the gems of heaven, her starry train.  
But neither breath of morn when she ascends  
With charm of earliest birds ; nor rising sun  
On this delightful land ; nor herb, fruit, flower,  
Glist'ring with dew ; nor fragrance after showers ;  
Nor grateful evening mild ; nor silent night,  
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,  
Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Paradise Lost," iv. 638-655.



## JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719).

### A COUNTRY SUNDAY WITH SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY.

(From *The Spectator*, No. 112, July 9, 1711.)

I AM always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard, as a citizen does upon the 'Change, the whole parish-politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit cloth,

and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me that at his coming to the estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that, in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common Prayer-book; and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the Psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody in it to sleep besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing Psalms half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces amen three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend in the midst of the service calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that, the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these

little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then inquires how such a one's wife, or mother, or son, or father, do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me that upon a catechising day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a fitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and, that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the Church service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the squire; and the squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them almost in every sermon that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year, and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country,

are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

### SIR ROGER IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

(From *The Spectator*, No. 329, March 18, 1712.)

My friend Sir Roger de Coverley told me the other night that he had been reading my paper upon Westminster Abbey, in which, says he, there are a great many ingenious fancies. He told me at the same time that he observed I had promised another paper upon the tombs, and that he should be glad to go and see them with me, not having visited them since he had read history. I could not at first imagine how this came into the knight's head, till I recollected that he had been very busy all last summer upon "*Baker's Chronicle*," which he has quoted several times in his disputes with Sir Andrew Freeport since his last coming to town. Accordingly I promised to call upon him the next morning, that we might go together to the Abbey.

I found the knight under his butler's hands, who always shaves him. He was no sooner dressed than he called for a glass of the widow Trueby's water, which he told me he always drank before he went abroad. He recommended to me a dram of it at the same time, with so much heartiness, that I could not forbear drinking it. As soon as I had got it down, I found it very unpalatable; upon which the knight, observing that I had made several wry faces, told me that he knew I should not like it at first, but that it was the best thing in the world against the stone or gravel.

I could have wished, indeed, that he had acquainted me with the virtues of it sooner; but it was too late to complain, and I knew what he had done was out of goodwill. Sir Roger told me further, that he looked upon it to be very good for a man whilst he staid in town, to keep off infection, and that he got together a quantity of it upon the first news of the sickness being at Dantzic; when, of a sudden, turning short to one of his servants, who stood behind him, he bid him call a hackney-coach, and take care it was an elderly man that drove it.

He then resumed his discourse upon Mrs. Trueby's water, telling me that the widow Trueby was one who did more good than all the doctors and apothecaries in the county: that she distilled every poppy that grew within five miles of her; that she distributed her water gratis among all sorts of people: to which the knight added, that she had a very great jointure, and that the whole country would fain have it a match between him and her, "and truly," says Sir Roger, "if I had not been engaged, perhaps I could not have done better."

His discourse was broken off by his man's telling him he had called a coach. Upon our going to it, after having cast his eye upon the wheels, he asked the coachman if his axle-tree was good; upon the fellow's telling him he would warrant it, the knight turned to me, told me he looked like an honest man, and went in without further ceremony.

We had not gone far, when Sir Roger, popping out his head, called the coachman down from his box, and upon his presenting himself at the window, asked him if he smoked. As I was considering what this would end in, he bid him stop by the way at any good tobacconist's, and take in a roll of their best Virginia. Nothing material happened in the remaining part of our journey, till we were set down at the west end of the Abbey.

As we went up the body of the church, the knight pointed at the trophies upon one of the new monuments, and cried

out, "A brave man, I warrant him!" Passing afterwards by Sir Cloudsley Shovel,<sup>1</sup> he flung his hand that way, and cried, "Sir Cloudsley Shovel! a very gallant man." As we stood before Busby's<sup>2</sup> tomb, the knight uttered himself again after the same manner: "Dr. Busby! a great man: he whipped my grandfather: a very great man! I should have gone to him myself, if I had not been a blockhead: a very great man!"

We were immediately conducted into the little chapel on the right hand.<sup>3</sup> Sir Roger, planting himself at our historian's elbow, was very attentive to everything he said, particularly to the account he gave us of the lord who had cut off the King of Morocco's head. Among several other figures, he was very well pleased to see the statesman Cecil upon his knees; and, concluding them all to be great men, was conducted to the figure which represents that martyr to good housewifery who died by the prick of a needle. Upon our interpreter's telling us she was a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, the knight was very inquisitive into her name and family; and after having regarded her finger for some time, "I wonder," says he, "that Sir Richard Baker has said nothing of her in his 'Chronicle.'"

We were then conveyed to the two coronation chairs, where my old friend, after having heard that the stone underneath the most ancient of them, which was brought from Scotland, was called Jacob's pillow, sat himself down in the chair, and, looking like the figure of an old Gothic king, asked our interpreter what authority they had to say that Jacob had ever been in Scotland? The fellow, instead of returning him an answer, told him he hoped that his honour would pay his forfeit. I could observe Sir Roger a little ruffled upon being thus trepanned; but our guide not insisting upon his demand, the knight soon recovered his

<sup>1</sup> Perished by shipwreck off the Scilly Isles, 1707.

<sup>2</sup> Headmaster of Westminster School, 1640-1695.

<sup>3</sup> St. Edmund's Chapel.

good humour, and whispered in my ear, that if Will Wimble were with us, and saw those two chairs, it would go hard but he would get a tobacco-stopper out of one or t'other of them.

Sir Roger, in the next place, laid his hand upon Edward the Third's sword, and leaning upon the pommel of it, gave us the whole history of the Black Prince; concluding, that in Sir Richard Baker's opinion, Edward the Third was one of the greatest princes that ever sat upon the English throne.

We were then shown Edward the Confessor's tomb; upon which Sir Roger acquainted us, that he was the first who touched for the evil: and afterwards, Henry the Fourth's, upon which he shook his head, and told us there was fine reading in the casualties of that reign.

Our conductor then pointed to that monument where there is the figure of one of our English kings without a head; and upon giving us to know that the head, which was of beaten silver, had been 'stolen away several years since, "Some Whig, I'll warrant you," says Sir Roger; "you ought to lock up your kings better; they will carry off the body too if you don't take care."

The glorious names of Henry the Fifth and Queen Elizabeth gave the knight great opportunities of shining, and of doing justice to Sir Richard Baker, who, as our knight observed with some surprise, had a great many kings in him, whose monuments he had not seen in the abbey.

For my own part, I could not but be pleased to see the knight show such an honest passion for the glory of his country, and such a respectful gratitude to the memory of its princes.

I must not omit that the benevolence of my good old friend, which flows out towards every one he converses with, made him very kind to our interpreter, whom he looked upon as an extraordinary man; for which reason he shook him by the hand at parting, telling him that he should

be very glad to see him at his lodgings in Norfolk Buildings, and talk over these matters with him more at leisure.

## A LADY'S LIBRARY.

(From *The Spectator*, No. 37, April 12, 1711.)

Some months ago, my friend Sir Roger, being in the country, inclosed a letter to me, directed to a certain lady whom I shall here call by the name of Leonora, and, as it contained matters of consequence, desired me to deliver it to her with my own hand. Accordingly I waited upon her ladyship pretty early in the morning, and was desired by her woman to walk into her lady's library till such time as she was in a readiness to receive me. The very sound of a lady's library gave me a great curiosity to see it, and as it was some time before the lady came to me, I had an opportunity of turning over a great many of her books, which were ranged together in a very beautiful order. At the end of the folios, which were finely bound and gilt, were great jars of china placed one above another in a very noble piece of architecture. The quartos were separated from the octavos by a pile of smaller vessels, which rose in a delightful pyramid. The octavos were bounded by tea-dishes of all shapes, colours, and sizes, which were so disposed on a wooden frame, that they looked like one continued pillar indented with the finest strokes of sculpture, and stained with the greatest variety of dyes. That part of the library which was designed for the reception of plays and pamphlets and other loose papers, was inclosed in a kind of square, consisting of one of the prettiest grotesque works that ever I saw, and made up of scaramouches, lions, monkeys, mandarins, trees, shells, and a thousand other odd figures in China-ware. In the midst of the room was a little Japan-table, with a quire of gilt paper upon it, and on the paper a silver snuff-box made in the shape



of a little book. I found there were several other counterfeit books upon the upper shelves, which were carved in wood, and served only to fill up the number like faggots in the muster of a regiment. I was wonderfully pleased with such a mixt kind of furniture, as seemed very suitable both to the lady and the scholar, and did not know at first whether I should fancy myself in a grotto or in a library.

Upon my looking into the books, I found there were some few which the lady had bought for her own use, but that most of them had been got together, either because she had heard them praised, or because she had seen the authors of them. Among several that I examined I very well remember these that follow :

Ogilby's Virgil.<sup>1</sup>

Dryden's Juvenal.<sup>1</sup>

Cassandra.<sup>2</sup>

Cleopatra.<sup>2</sup>

Astræa.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Isaac Newton's works.

The Grand Cyrus,<sup>2</sup> with a pin stuck in one of the middle leaves.

Pembroke's Arcadia.<sup>3</sup>

Locke of Human Understanding; with a paper of patches in it.

A Spelling Book.

A Dictionary for the Explanation of Hard Words.

Sherlock upon Death.

The Fifteen Comforts of Matrimony.<sup>4</sup>

Sir William Temple's Essays.

Father Malebranche's Search after Truth, translated into English.

A Book of Novels.

The Academy of Compliments.<sup>5</sup>

The Ladies Calling.

Tales in Verse, by Mr. Dufey : bound in red leather, gilt on the back, and doubled down in several places.

All the Classic Authors in wood.

A Set of Elzevirs by the same hand.

Clelia<sup>2</sup> : which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower.

Baker's Chronicle.

Advice to a Daughter.

The New Atalantis, with a key to it.

Mr. Steele's Christian Hero.

A Prayer Book ; with a bottle of Hungary water by the side of it.

Dr. Sacheverell's Speech.

Fielding's Trial.

Seneca's Morals.

Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.

La Ferte's Instructions for Country Dances.

<sup>1</sup> Translations.

<sup>2</sup> Long romances translated from the French.

<sup>3</sup> By Sir Philip Sidney.

<sup>4</sup> A satirical work translated from the French.

<sup>5</sup> A book of etiquette.

I was taking a catalogue in my pocket-book of these and several other authors, when Leonora entered, and upon my presenting her with the letter from the knight, told me, with an unpeakable grace, that she hoped Sir Roger was in good health; I answered Yes, for I hate long speeches, and after a bow or two retired.

Leonora was formerly a celebrated beauty, and is still a very lovely woman. She has been a widow for two or three years, and being unfortunate in her first marriage, has taken a resolution never to venture upon a second. She has no children to take care of, and leaves the management of her estate to my good friend Sir Roger. But as the mind naturally sinks into a kind of lethargy and falls asleep that is not agitated by some favourite pleasures and pursuits, Leonora has turned all the passions of her sex into a love of books and retirement. She converses chiefly with men, as she has often said herself, but it is only in their writings; and admits of very few male visitants, except my friend Sir Roger, whom she hears with great pleasure and without scandal. As her reading has lain very much among romances, it has given her a very particular turn of thinking, and discovers itself even in her house, her gardens, and her furniture. Sir Roger has entertained me an hour together with a description of her country seat, which is situated in a kind of wilderness about a hundred miles distant from London, and looks like a little enchanted palace. The rocks about her are shaped into artificial grottos, covered with woodbine and jessamine. The woods are cut into shady walks, twisted into bowers, and filled with cages of turtles. The springs are made to run among pebbles, and by that means taught to murmur very agreeably. They are likewise collected into a beautiful lake that is inhabited by a couple of swans, and empties itself by a little rivulet which runs through a green meadow, and is known in the family by the name of The Purling Stream. The knight likewise tells me that this lady preserves her game better

than any of the gentlemen in the country. "Not," says Sir Roger, "that she sets so great a value upon her partridges and pheasants as upon her larks and nightingales. For she says that every bird which is killed in her ground will spoil a concert, and that she shall certainly miss him the next year.

When I think how oddly this lady is improved by learning, I look upon her with a mixture of admiration and pity. Amidst these innocent entertainments which she has formed to herself, how much more valuable does she appear than those of her sex who employ themselves in diversions that are less reasonable, though more in fashion? What improvements would a woman have made who is so susceptible of impressions from what she reads, had she been guided to such books as have a tendency to enlighten the understanding and rectify the passions, as well as to those which are of little more use than to divert the understanding?

## HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754).

### THE RULES OF GOOD BREEDING.

(From an "Essay on Conversation," *Miscellanies*, 1743.)

It would be tedious, and perhaps impossible, to specify every instance, or to lay down exact rules for our conduct in every minute particular. I shall mention some of the chief which most ordinarily occur, after promising, that the business of the whole is no more than to convey to others an idea of your esteem of them, which is indeed the substance of all the compliments, ceremonies, presents, and whatever passes between well bred people.

Now, in order to descend minutely into any rules for good breeding, it will be necessary to lay some scene, or to throw our disciple into some particular circumstance. We will begin then with a visit in the country; and as the principal actor on this occasion is the person who receives it, we will, as briefly as possible, lay down some general rules for his conduct; marking, at the same time, the principal deviations we have observed on these occasions.

When an expected guest arrives to dinner at your house, if your equal, or indeed not greatly your inferior, he should be sure to find the family in some order, and yourself dressed and ready to receive him at your gate with a smiling countenance. This infuses an immediate cheerfulness into your guest, and persuades him of your esteem and desire of

his company. Not so is the behaviour of Polysperchon at whose gate you are obliged to knock a considerable time before you gain admittance. At length, the door being opened to you by a maid, or some improper servant,<sup>1</sup> who wonders where all the men<sup>2</sup> are; and, being asked if the gentleman is at home, answers, she believes so; you are conducted into a hall, or back parlour, where you stay some time before the gentleman, in dishabille from his study or his garden, waits upon you, asks pardon, and assures you he did not expect you so soon.

Your guest, being introduced into a drawing room, is, after the first ceremonies, to be asked whether he will refresh himself after his journey, before dinner (for which he is never to stay longer than the usual or fixed hour). But this request is never to be repeated oftener than twice, in imitation of Chalepus, who, as if hired by a physician, crams wine in a morning down the throats of his most temperate friends, their constitutions being not so dear to them as their present quiet.

When dinner is on the table, and the ladies have taken their places, the gentlemen are to be introduced into the eating-room, where they are to be seated with as much seeming indifference as possible, unless there be any present whose degrees claim an undoubted precedence. As to the rest, the general rules of precedence are by marriage, age, and profession. Lastly, in placing your guests, regard is rather to be had to birth than fortune; for though purse-pride is forward enough to exalt itself, it bears a degradation with more secret comfort and ease than the former, as being more inwardly satisfied with itself, and less apprehensive of neglect or contempt.

The order in helping your guests is to be regulated by that of placing them: but here I must with great submission recommend to the lady at the upper end of the table, to distribute her favours as equally, and as impartially as she

<sup>1</sup> Whose business is not to attend to the door.

<sup>2</sup> Menstruaria.

can. I have sometimes seen a large dish of fish extend no farther than to the fifth person, and a haunch of venison lose all its fat before half the table had tasted it.

A single request to eat of any particular dish, how elegant soever, is the utmost I allow. I strictly prohibit all earnest solicitations, all complaints that you have no appetite, which are sometimes little less than burlesque, and always impertinent and troublesome.

But to proceed. After a reasonable time if your guest intends staying with you the whole evening, and declines the bottle, you may propose play, walking, or any other amusement; but these are to be but rarely mentioned, and offered to his choice with all indifference on your part. What person can be so dull as not to perceive in *Argyrtes* a longing to pick your pockets? or in *Alazon*, a desire to satisfy his own vanity in showing you the rarities of his house and gardens? When your guest offers to go, there should be no solicitations to stay, unless for the whole night, and that no farther than to give him a moral assurance of his being welcome so to do: no assertions that he shan't go yet; no laying on violent hands; no private orders to servants to delay providing the horses or vehicles; like *Desmophylax*, who never suffers anyone to depart from his house without entitling him to an action of false imprisonment.

Let us now consider a little the part which the visitor himself is to act. And first, he is to avoid the two extremes of being too early, or too late, so as neither to surprise his friend unawares or unprovided, nor to detain him too long in expectation. *Orthrius*, who hath nothing to do, disturbs your rest in a morning; and the frugal *Chronophidus*, lest he should waste some minutes of his precious time, is sure to spoil your dinner.

The address at your arrival should be as short as possible, especially when you visit a superior; not imitating *Phlenaphius*, who would stop his friend in the rain rather than omit a single bow.

Be not too observant of trifling ceremonies, such as rising, sitting, walking first in or out of the room, except with one greatly your superior; but when such a one offers you precedence, it is uncivil to refuse it: of which I will give you the following instance: an English nobleman, being in France, was bid by Louis XIV to enter his coach before him, which he excused himself from; the King then immediately mounted, and, ordering the door to be shut, drove on, leaving the nobleman behind him.

Never refuse anything offered you out of civility, unless in preference of a lady, and that no oftener than once; for nothing is more truly good breeding than to avoid being troublesome. Though the taste and humour of the visitor is to be chiefly considered, yet is some regard likewise to be had to that of the master of the house; for otherwise your company will be rather a penance than a pleasure. Methusus plainly discovers his visit to be paid to his sober friend's bottle; nor will Philopasus abstain from cards, though he is certain they are agreeable only to himself; while the slender Leptines gives his fat entertainer a sweat, and makes him run the hazard of breaking his wind up his own mounts.

If conveniency allows your staying longer than the time proposed, it may be civil to offer to depart, lest your stay may be incommodious to your friend: but if you perceive the contrary, by his solicitations, they should be readily accepted, without tempting him to break those rules we have above laid down for him; causing a confusion in his family, and among his servants, by preparations for your departure. Lastly, when you are resolved to go, the same method is to be observed which I have prescribed at your arrival. No tedious ceremonies of taking leave: not like Hyperphylus, who bows and kisses and squeezes by the hand as heartily, and wishes you as much health and happiness, when he is going a journey home of ten miles, from a common acquaintance, as if he was leaving his nearest friend on a voyage to the East Indies.

SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784).

MOLLY QUICK'S COMPLAINT OF HER  
MISTRESS.

(From *The Idler*, No. 46, March 3, 1759.)

MR. IDLER,

I am encouraged by the notice you have taken of Betty Broom,<sup>1</sup> to represent the miseries which I suffer from a species of tyranny which, I believe, is not very uncommon, though perhaps it may have escaped the observation of those who converse little with fine ladies, or see them only in their public character.

To this method of venting my vexation I am the more inclined, because if I do not complain to you, I must burst in silence, for my mistress has teased me and teased me, till I can hold no longer, and I must not tell her of her tricks. The girls that live in common service can quarrel, and give warning, and find other places; but we that live with great ladies, if we once offend them, have nothing left but to return into the country. I am waiting maid to a lady who keeps the best company, and is seen at every place of fashionable resort. I am envied by all the maids in the square, for few countesses leave off so many clothes as my mistress, and nobody shares with me: so that I supply two families in the country with finery for the assizes and horse

<sup>1</sup> A poor charity schoolgirl, the heroine of earlier numbers (26 and 29) of *The Idler*.



ances, besides what I wear myself. The steward and house-keeper have joined against me to procure my removal, that they may advance a relation of their own; but their designs are found out by my lady, who says I need not fear them, for she will never have Dowdies about her.

You would think, Mr. Idler, like others—that I am very happy, and may well be contented with my lot. But I will tell you. My lady has an odd humour. She never orders anything in direct words, for she loves a sharp girl that can take a hint.

I would not have you suspect that she has anything to hint which she is ashamed to speak at length, for none have greater purity of sentiment or rectitude of intention. She has nothing to hide yet nothing will she tell. She always gives her directions obliquely and allusively, by the mention of something relative or consequential, without any other purpose than to exercise my acuteness and her own.

It is impossible to give a notion of this style otherwise than by examples. One night when she had set writing letters till it was time to be dressed—

“Molly,” said she, “the ladies are all to be at court to-night in white aprons” When she means that I should send to order the chair, she says—“I think the streets are clean, I may venture to walk.” When she would have something put into its place, she bids me *lay it on the floor*. If she would have me snuff the candles, she asks *whether I think her eyes are like a cat's?* If she thinks her chocolate delayed, she talks of *the benefit of abstinence*. If any needlework is forgotten, she supposes *that I have heard of the lady who died by pricking her finger*.

She always imagines that I can recall everything past, from a single word. If she wants her head<sup>1</sup> from the milliner, she only says—“Molly you know Mrs. Pope.” If she would have the mantua-maker sent for, she remarks that

<sup>1</sup> Head-dress.

*Mr. Taffaty, the mercer, was here last week.* She ordered, a fortnight ago that the first time she was abroad all day I should choose her a new set of coffee-cups at the china-shop: of this she reminded me yesterday, as she was going downstairs, by saying—"You can't find your way now to Pall-Mall."

All this would never vex me, if, by increasing my trouble, she spared her own; but, dear Mr. Idler, is it not as easy to say *coffee-cups* as *Pall-Mall*, and to tell me in plain words what I am to do and when it is to be done, as to torment her own head with the labour of finding hints, and mine with that of understanding them?

When first I came to this lady, I had nothing like the learning that I have now; for she has many books, and I have much time to read; so that of late I seldom have missed her meaning; but when she first took me I was an ignorant girl; and she, who, as is very common, confounded want of knowledge with want of understanding, began once to despair of bringing me to any thing, because, when I came into her chamber at the call of her bell, she asked me, *Whether we lived in Zembla*, and I did not guess the meaning of her enquiry; but modestly answered that *I could not tell*. She had happened to ring once when I did not hear her, and meant to put me in mind of that country, where sounds are said to be congealed by the frost.

Another time, as I was dressing her hair, she began to talk on a sudden of *Medusa* and *Snakes*, and *men turned into stone*, and maids that, if they were not watched, would let their mistresses be *Gorgons*, I looked round me half frightened, and quite bewildered; till at last, finding that her literature was thrown away upon me, she bid me, with great vehemence, reach the curling-irons.

It is not without some indignation, Mr. Idler, that I discover, in these artifices of vexation, something worse than foppery or caprice; a mean delight in superiority, which knows itself in no danger of reproof or opposition; a cruel

pleasure in seeing the perplexity of a mind obliged to find what is studiously concealed, and a mean indulgence of potty malevolence, in the sharp censure of involuntary, and very often of inevitable failings. When, beyond her expectation, I hit upon her meaning, I can perceive a sudden cloud of disappointment spread over her face, and have sometimes been afraid lest I should lose her favour by understanding her when she means to puzzle me.

This day, however, she has conquered my sagacity, When she went out of her dressing-room, she said nothing, but *Molly, you know*, and hastened to her chariot. What I am to know is yet a secret; but if I do not know, before she comes back, what I yet have no means of discovering, she will make my dullness a pretence for a fortnight's ill-humour, treat me as a creature devoid of the faculties necessary to the common duties of life, and perhaps give the next gown to the housekeeper. I am, Sir, your humble servant, Molly Quick.

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1744).

### THE FAME COACH.

#### A REVERIE.

(From *The Bee*, No. 5, Nov. 3, 1759).

I FANCIED myself placed in the yard of a large inn, in which there were an infinite number of waggons and stage-coaches, attended by fellows who either invited the company to take their places, or were busied in packing their baggage. Each vehicle had its inscription, showing the place of its destination. On one I could read, The Pleasure Stage Coach; on another, The Waggon of Industry; on a third, The Vanity Whim; and on a fourth, The Landau of Riches. I had some inclination to step into each of these, one after another; but, I know not by what means, I passed them by, and at last fixed my eye upon a small carriage, Berlin fashion, which seemed the most convenient vehicle at a distance in the world; and upon my nearer approach found it to be the Fame Machine.

I instantly made up to the coachman, whom I found to be an affable and seemingly good-natured fellow. He informed me, that he had but a few days ago returned from the Temple of Fame, to which he had been carrying Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, Congreve, and Colley Cibber;<sup>1</sup> that

<sup>1</sup> A poet of no merit who was made Laureate in 1730. He is satirized by Pope in the "Dunciad" (1742). Cibber's autobiography is valuable for the light it throws on the history of the stage in his day.

they made but indifferent company by the way ; and that he once or twice was going to empty his berlin of the whole cargo : " However," says he, " I got them all safe home with no other damage than a black eye, which Colley gave Mr. Pope, and am now returned for another coachful."

" If that be all, friend," said I, " and if you are in want of company, I'll make one with all my heart. Open the door I hope the machine rides easy." — " Oh, for that, sir extremely easy." But still keeping the door shut, and measuring me with his eye, " Pray, sir, have you no luggage. You seem to be a good-natured sort of a gentleman ; but I don't find you have got any luggage, and I never permit any to travel with me but such as have something valuable to pay for coach-hire."

Examining my pockets, I own I was not a little disconcerted at this unexpected rebuff ; but considering that I carried a number of the BEE under my arm, I was resolved to open it in his eyes, and dazzle him with the splendour of the page. He read the title and contents, however, without any emotion, and assured me he had never heard of it before. " In short, friend," said he, now losing all his former respect, " you must not come in : I expect better passengers ; but as you seem a harmless creature, perhaps, if there be room left, I may let you ride a while for charity."

I now took my stand by the coachman at the door ; and since I could not command a seat, was resolved to be as useful as possible, and earn by my assiduity what I could not by my merit.

The next that presented for a place was a most whimsical figure indeed. He was hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets, and came dancing up to the door with all the confidence of instant admittance. The volubility of his motion and address prevented my being able to read more of his cargo than the word Inspector, which was written in great letters

at the top of some of the papers. He opened the coach-door himself without any ceremony, and was just slipping in, when the coachman, with as little ceremony, pulled him back.

Our figure seemed perfectly angry at this repulse, and demanded gentleman's satisfaction. "Lord, sir!" replied the coachman, "instead of proper luggage, by your bulk you seem loaded for a West India voyage. You are big enough, with all your papers, to crack twenty stage-coaches. Excuse me, indeed, sir, for you must not enter."

Our figure now began to expostulate: he assured the coachman, that though this baggage seemed so bulky, it was perfectly light, and that he would be contented with the smallest corner of room. But Jehu was inflexible, and the carrier of the Inspectors was sent to dance back again, with all his papers fluttering in the wind. We expected to have no more trouble from this quarter, when, in a few minutes, the same figure changed his appearance, like harlequin upon the stage, and with the same confidence again made his approaches, dressed in lace, and carrying nothing but a nosegay. Upon coming nearer he thrust the nosegay to the coachman's nose, grasped the brass, and seemed now resolved to enter by violence. I found the struggle soon begin to grow hot, and the coachman, who was a little old, unable to continue the contest; so, in order to ingratiate myself, I stepped in to his assistance, and our united efforts sent our literary Proteus, though worsted, unconquered still, clear off, dancing a rigadon, and smelling to his own nosegay.<sup>1</sup>

The person who after him appeared as candidate for a place in the stage came up with an air not quite so confident, but somewhat, however, theatrical; and, instead of entering, made the coachman a very low bow, which the other returned, and desired to see his baggage; upon which he instantly produced some farces, a tragedy, and other miscellany pro-

<sup>1</sup> This was Sir John Hill, a quack doctor, who died in 1775. His chief work was entitled "The Vegetable System" (1759-1775).

ductions. The coachman, casting his eye upon the cargo, assured him, at present he could not possibly have a place, but hoped in time he might aspire to one, as he seemed to have read in the book of nature, without a careful perusal of which none ever found entrance at the Temple of Fame. "What!" replied the disappointed poet,<sup>1</sup> "shall my tragedy, in which I have vindicated the cause of liberty and virtue ——"—"Follow nature," returned the other, "and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity. Had you been first in the cause of freedom, or praised in virtue more than an empty name, it is possible you might have gained admittance; but at present I beg, sir, you will stand aside for another gentleman whom I see approaching."<sup>2</sup>

This was a very grave personage, whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved, and even disagreeable, figures I had seen; but as he approached his appearance improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I perceived that, in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined. Upon coming to open the stage-door, he lifted a parcel of folios into the seat before him, but our inquisitorial coachman at once shoved them out again. "What! not take in my Dictionary?" exclaimed the other in a rage. "Be patient, sir," replied the coachman: "I have drove a coach, man and boy, these two thousand years; but I do not remember to have carried above one dictionary during the whole time. That little book which I perceive peeping from one of your pockets, may I presume to ask what it contains?"—"A mere trifle," replied the author; "it is called the Rambler."—"The Rambler!" says the coachman: "I beg, sir, you'll take your place; I have heard our ladies in the court of Apollo frequently mention it with rapture; and Clio, who happens to be a little grave, has been heard

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Murphy (1727-1805), an author and actor.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

to prefer it to the Spectator; though others have observed, that the reflections, by being refined, sometimes become manner."

This grave gentleman was scarcely seated, when another whose appearance was something more modern, seemed willing to enter, yet afraid to ask. He carried in his hand a bundle of e-ssays, of which the coachman was curious enough to inquire the contents. "These," replied the gentleman, "are rhapsodies against the religion of my country."—"And how can you expect to come into my coach, after thus choosing the wrong side of the question?"—"Ay, but I am right," replied the other; "and if you give me leave, I shall, in a few minutes, state the argument."—"Right or wrong," said the coachman, "he who disturbs religion is a blockhead, and he shall never travel in a coach of mine."

"If, then," said the gentleman, mustering up all his courage, "if I am not to have admittance as an essayist, I hope I shall not be repulsed as an historian; the last volume of my history met with applause."—"Yes," replied the coachman, "but I have heard only the first approved at the Temple of Fame; and as I see you have it about you, enter without further ceremony."<sup>1</sup>

My attention was now diverted to a crowd who were pushing forward a person that seemed more inclined to the Stage-coach of Riches; but by their means he was driven forward to the same machine, which he, however, seemed heartily to despise. Impelled, however, by their solicitations, he steps up, flourishing a voluminous history, and demanding admittance. "Sir, I have formerly heard your name mentioned," says the coachman, "but never as an historian. Is there no other work upon which you may claim a place?"—"None," replied the other, "except a romance; but it is a work of too trifling a nature to claim future attention."—"You mistake," says the inquisitor; "a well-written romance is no such easy task as is generally imagined. I remember

<sup>1</sup> David Hume (1711-1776), philosopher and historian.



formerly to have carried Cervantes<sup>1</sup> and Segrais;<sup>2</sup> and if you think fit, you may enter."<sup>3</sup>

Upon our three literary travellers coming into the same coach, I listened attentively to hear what might be the conversation that passed upon this extraordinary occasion; when, instead of agreeable or entertaining dialogue, I found them grumbling at each other, and each seemed discontented with his companions. Strange! thought I to myself, that they who are thus born to enlighten the world, should still preserve the narrow prejudices of childhood, and, by disagreeing, make even the highest merit ridiculous. Were the learned and the wise to unite against the dunces of society, instead of sometimes siding into opposite parties with them, they might throw a lustre upon each other's reputation, and teach every rank of subordinate merit, if not to admire, at least not to avow dislike.

In the midst of these reflections I perceived the coachman, unmindful of me, had now mounted the box. Several were approaching to be taken in whose pretensions I was sensible were very just; I therefore desired him to stop, and take in more passengers: but he replied, as he had now mounted the box, it would be improper to come down; but that he should take them all, one after the other, when he should return. So he drove away; and for myself, as I could not get in, I mounted behind, in order to hear the conversation on the way.

## THE MAN IN BLACK.

(From *The Citizen of the World*, Letter 26, 1760)

Though fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The Man in Black, whom I have often

<sup>1</sup> Cervantes (1547-1616) was the author of "Don Quixote."

<sup>2</sup> Segrais, a French poet of the seventeenth century.

<sup>3</sup> Tobias George Smollett (1721-1771), novelist and historian.

mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinged with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed a humorist in a nation of humorists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love.

I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and, while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings, as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every parish-house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it in some measure encourages idleness extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences; let me assure you, sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain, earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the Man in Black: I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive, that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before: he threw in some episodes of his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars were he a magistrate, hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggar-men. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend, looking wistfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase: he assured me, that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half-value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration.

I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice, that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress still aimed at good-humour, was

an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding: his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion, his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

### BEAU TIBBS AT HOME.

(From *The Citizen of the World*, Letter 55, 1760.)

There are some acquaintances whom it is no easy matter to shake off. My little beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and, slapping me on the shoulder, saluted me with an air of the most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair; wore a dirtier shirt, and had on a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be an harmless amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity; so we walked forward on the terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the usual topics preliminary to particular conversation.

The oddities that marked his character, however, soon began to appear; he bowed to several well-dressed persons, who, by their manner of returning the compliment, appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket-book, seeming to take memorandums before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me

through the length of the whole Mall, fretting at his absurdities, and fancying myself laughed at as well as he by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, "Hang me," cries he, with an air of vivacity, "I never saw the park so thin in my life before; there's no company at all to-day. Not a single face to be seen." "No company," interrupted I, peevishly; "no company where there is such a crowd? Why, man, there is too much. What are the thousands that have been laughing at us but company?" "Lord, my dear," returned he, with the utmost good humour, "you seem immensely chagrined; but, hang me, when the world laughs at me, I laugh at all the world, and so we are even. My Lord Trip, Bill Squash, the Creolian, and I, sometimes make a party at being ridiculous; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke's sake. But I see you are grave; and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with my wife to-day; I must insist on't; I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred, but that's between ourselves, under the inspection of the Countess of Shoreditch. A charming body of voice! But no more of that, she shall give us a song. You shall see my little girl too. Carolina Wilhelma Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature; I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son; but that's in friendship, let it go no further; she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays on the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place I'll make her a scholar; I'll teach her Greek myself, and I intend to learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret."

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply, he took me by the arm and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways; for, from some motives to me unknown, he seemed to have a particular aversion to

every frequented street ; at last, however, we got to the door of a dismal-looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which seemed ever to lie most hospitably open : and I began to ascend an old and creaking staircase, when, as he mounted to show me the way, he demanded whether I delighted in prospects ; to which answering in the affirmative, "Then," says he, "I shall show you one of the most charming out of my windows ; we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tip top, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such a one ; but, as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to keep my prospects at home, that my friends may come to see me the oftener."

By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend, till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney ; and knocking at the door, a voice with a Scotch accent, from within, demanded, "Wha's there ?" My conductor answered that it was him. But this not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand : to which he answered louder than before, and now the door was opened by an old maid-servant with cautious reluctance.

When we were got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and turning to the old woman, asked where her lady was ? "Good troth," replied she, in the northern dialect, "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer." "My two shirts !" cries he in a tone that faltered with confusion, "what does the idiot mean ?" "I ken what I mean well enough," replied the other ; "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because——" "Fire and fury ! no more of thy stupid explanations," cried he. "Go and inform her we have got company. Were that Scotch hag," continued he, turning to me, "to be for

ever in the family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising too, as I had her from a parliament man, a friend of mine, from the Highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that's a secret."

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs' arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the chamber and all its furniture; which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once japanned, a cradle in one corner, a lumbering cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess, and a mandarin without a head, were stuck over the chimney; and round the walls several paltry, unframed pictures, which, he observed, were all of his own drawing. "What do you think, sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? There's the true keeping in it; it's my own face: and though there happens to be no likeness, a countess offered me an hundred for its fellow: I refused her; for, hang it, that would be mechanical, you know."

The wife, at last, made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquette; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such odious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had stayed out all night at Vauxhall Gardens with the countess, who was excessively fond of the horns. "And indeed, my dear," added she, turning to her husband, "his lordship drank your health in a bumper." "Poor Jack," cries he, "a dear good-natured creature, I know he loves me; but I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner? You need make no great preparations neither, there are but three of us; something elegant, and little will do; a turbot, an ortolan, or a——" "Or what do you think, my dear," interrupts the wife, "of a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce?" "The



very thing," replies he; "it will eat best with some smart bottled beer; but be sure to let's have the sauce his grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat; that is country all over; extreme disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life."

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase; the company of fools may at first make us smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy. I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and after having shown my respect to the house, by giving the old servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave: Mr. Tibbs assuring me that dinner, if I stayed, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834).

OLD CHINA.

(First published in *The London Magazine*, March, 1823.)

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that, under the notion of men and women, float about, un-circumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, has made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a

lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays!<sup>1</sup>

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.<sup>2</sup>

I was pointing out to my cousin<sup>3</sup> last evening, over our Hyson<sup>4</sup> (which we are old fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon) some of these *speciosa miracula*<sup>5</sup> upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to over-shade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

“I wish the good old times would come again,” she said, “when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state;”—so she was pleased to ramble on,—“in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days

<sup>1</sup> An old English dance.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Lamb, Charles's sister.

<sup>5</sup> Shining wonders.

<sup>2</sup> The old name for China.

<sup>4</sup> A kind of China tea.

before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

“Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher,<sup>1</sup> which you dragged home late at night from Barker’s in Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o’clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that over-worn suit—your old corbeau<sup>2</sup>—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

“When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo,

<sup>1</sup> Elizabethan dramatists.

<sup>2</sup> Of a dark green (almost black) colour.

which we christened the 'Lady Blanch'; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday—holydays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savoury cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a tablecloth—and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall?<sup>1</sup> Now, when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the battle of Hexham,<sup>2</sup> and the surrender of Calais,<sup>2</sup> and Bannister<sup>3</sup> and Mrs. Bland<sup>3</sup> in the Children in the Wood—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Walton, "Compleat Angler," chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Plays by George Colman the younger

<sup>3</sup> An actor and actress, contemporaries of Lamb.

sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with *Rosalind in Arden*,<sup>1</sup> or with *Viola at the Court of Illyria*?<sup>2</sup> You used to say, that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough,—but there was still a law of civility to women recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty over come heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

“There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more

<sup>1</sup> See Shakespeare, “*As You Like It*.”

<sup>2</sup> See Shakespeare, “*Twelfth Night*.”

that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

“I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now,) we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with ‘lusty brimmers’ (as you used to quote it out of *heartly cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the ‘coming guest.’ Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us.”

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor — hundred pounds a year. “It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must

put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superfluous into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth; a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly walked: live better, and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient stair-cases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed when the top-most stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Croesus had, or the great Jew R——<sup>1</sup> is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madona-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house.”

<sup>1</sup> Rothschild.



## THE SUPERANNUATED MAN.

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If peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six and thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing-lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant play-time, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—No busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it.

Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated ‘prentices and little trades-folks, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and lively expressing the hollowness of a day’s pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my later years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to

my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought, now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well,

a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

*Esto perpetua!*<sup>1</sup>

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could

<sup>1</sup> May it last for ever!

read it away, but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candle-light time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in by-gone winters. I walk, read or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure ; I let it come to me. I am like the man

. . . That's born, and has his years come to him,  
In some green desert.

"Years!" you will say! "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us, he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself ; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me three-fold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks, with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death :

. . . 'Twas but just now he went away ;  
I have not since had time to shed a tear ;  
And yet the distance does the same appear  
As if he had been a thousand years from me.  
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old companions, the faithful partners of my toils for six and thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know, that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch[ambers], dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do[dwell], mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl[umley], officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham<sup>1</sup> or a Whittington of old, stately House of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my "works!" There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas<sup>2</sup> left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

<sup>1</sup> Founder of the Royal Exchange in the City of London.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Aquinas, a mediæval theologian (1226-1274.)

A fortnight has passed since the day of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian,<sup>1</sup> from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond-street, and it seems to me that I had been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in a morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish-street Hill? Where is Fenchurch-street? Stones of old Mincing-lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six and thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles.<sup>2</sup> It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a

<sup>1</sup> An order of monks.

<sup>2</sup> Greek sculptures in the British Museum.

load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday?<sup>1</sup> All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holyday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holyday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton-mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends<sup>2</sup>

I am no longer . . . . ., clerk to the Firm of, &c. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate*<sup>3</sup> air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I

<sup>1</sup> Easter Monday, so called because of a great storm on that day in 1360.

<sup>2</sup> Hamlet, ii. 2, 517-519.

<sup>3</sup> "Otium cum dignitate," leisure with dignity.



take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est.*<sup>1</sup> I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

## DREAM-CHILDREN; A REVERIE.

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Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field,<sup>2</sup> who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable

<sup>1</sup> My work is finished.

<sup>2</sup> Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field, had been housekeeper at Blakesware in Hertfordshire.

mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county, but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eye-brows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her

grand-children, having us to the great-house in the holy-days, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——,<sup>1</sup> because he was so

<sup>1</sup> Lamb's elder brother, died 1821.

handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of every body, but of their great-grand-mother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair

Alice W—n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: “We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name”——and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

# WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778-1830).

## ON GOING A JOURNEY.

(First published in *The New Monthly Magazine*, 1822, as "Table Talk," No. 1.)

ONE of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, Nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

The fields his study, Nature was his book.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedgerows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room and fewer encumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

A friend in my retreat,  
Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet.<sup>2</sup>

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind much more than to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,  
That in the various bustle of resort  
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bloomfield, "The Farmer's Boy," "Spring," 31.

<sup>2</sup> Cowper, "Retirement," 741-742.

<sup>3</sup> Milton, "Comus," 378-380.

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a postchaise or in a Tilbury,<sup>1</sup> to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like "sunken wrack and sunless treasures," burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull commonplaces, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. "Leave, oh, leave me to my repose!" I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me "very stuff o' the conscience." Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that had so endeared it to me you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought

<sup>1</sup> A kind of gig for two, probably so called from the name of its first maker.

to rejoin your party. "Out upon such half-faced fellowship," say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's, that "he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time." So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. "Let me have a companion of my way," says Sterne, "were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." It is beautifully said; but, in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of Nature without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for this synthetical method on a journey in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a bean-field crossing the road perhaps your fellow-traveller has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-sighted and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the colour of a cloud, which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces



ill-humour. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company seems extravagance or affectation; and, on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered), is a task to which few are competent. We must “give it an understanding, but no tongue.” My old friend Coleridge, however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale a summer’s day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode. “He talked far above singing.” If I could so clothe my ideas in sounding and flowing words, I might perhaps wish to have some one with me to admire the swelling theme; or I could be more content, were it possible for me still to hear his echoing voice in the woods of All-Foxden.<sup>1</sup> They had “that fine madness in them which our first poets had”; and if they could have been caught by some rare instrument, would have breathed such strains as the following:—

Here be woods as green  
 As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet  
 As when smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet  
 Face of the curled streams, with flow’rs as many  
 As the young spring gives, and as choice as any;  
 Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,  
 Arbours o’ergrown with woodbines, caves and dells,  
 Choose where thou wilt, whilst I sit by and sing,  
 Or gather rushes to make many a ring  
 For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,  
 How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,

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<sup>1</sup> Near Nether Stowey, Somersetshire, where Coleridge was living in 1798.

Had I words and images at command like these, I would attempt to wake the thoughts that lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds: but at the sight of Nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot: I must have time to collect myself.

In general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects: it should be reserved for Table-talk. Lamb is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors; because he is the best within. I grant there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey, and that is what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom; and then, after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to "take one's ease at one's inn"! These eventful moments in our lives' history are too precious, too full of solid, heartfelt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop: they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea—

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The cups that cheer, but not inebriate<sup>2</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," i. 3.  
<sup>2</sup> Cowper, "The Task," iv. 39.

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal cutlet; Sancho in such a situation once fixed on cow-heel; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then, in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen [getting ready for the gentleman in the parlour]. These hours are sacred to silence and to musing, to be treasured up in the memory, and to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter. I would not waste them in idle talk; or if I must have the integrity of fancy broken in upon, I would rather it were by a stranger than a friend. A stranger takes his hue and character from the time and place: his is a part of the furniture and costume of an inn. If he is a Quaker, or from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so much the better. I do not even try to sympathise with him, and he breaks no squares. [How I love to see the camps of the gypsies, and to sigh my soul into that sort of life. If I express this feeling to another, he may qualify and spoil it with some objection.] I associate nothing with my travelling companion but present objects and passing events. In his ignorance of me and my affairs, I in a manner forget myself. But a friend reminds one of other things, rips up old grievances, and destroys the abstraction of the scene. He comes in ungraciously between us and our imaginary character. Something is dropped in the course of conversation that gives a hint of your profession and pursuits; or from having some one with you that knows the less sublime portions of your history, it seems that other people do. You are no longer a citizen of the world; but your “unhoused free condition is put into circumspection and confine.” The incognito of an inn is one of its striking privileges—“lord of one’s self, uncumbered with a name.” Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting,

ever-lasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweet-breads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour!* One may take one's choice of all characters in this romantic state of uncertainty as to one's real pretensions, and become indefinitely respectable and negatively right-worshipful. We baffle prejudice and disappoint conjecture; and from being so to others, begin to be objects of curiosity and wonder even to ourselves. We are no more those hackneyed commonplaces that we appear in the world; an inn restores us to the level of Nature, and quits scores with society!

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I have no objection to go to see ruins, aqueducts, pictures, in company with a friend or a party, but rather the contrary, for the former reason reversed. They are intelligible matters, and will bear talking about. The sentiment here is not tacit, but communicable and overt. Salisbury Plain is barren of criticism, but Stonehenge will bear a discussion antiquarian, picturesque, and philosophical. In setting out on a party of pleasure, the first consideration always is where we shall go to: in taking a solitary ramble, the question is what we shall meet with by the way. "The mind is its own place"; nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey. I can myself do the honours indifferently well to works of art and curiosity. I once took a party to Oxford with no mean *éclat*—showed them that seat of the Muses at a distance,

With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn'd!—

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges—was at home in the Bodleian; and at Blenheim quite superseded

Milton, "*Paradise Lost*," iii. 550.

the powdered Cicerone that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures. As another exception to the above reasoning, I should not feel confident in venturing on a journey in a foreign country without a companion. I should want at intervals to hear the sound of my own language. There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off. As the distance from home increases, this relief, which was at first a luxury, becomes a passion and an appetite. A person would almost feel stifled to find himself in the deserts of Arabia without friends and countrymen; there must be allowed to be something in the view of Athens or old Rome that claims the utterance of speech; and I own that the Pyramids are too mighty for any single contemplation. In such situations, so opposite to all one's ordinary train of ideas, one seems a species by one's-self, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support. Yet I did not feel this want or craving very pressing once, when I first set my foot on the laughing shores of France. Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbour, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity. I walked over "the vine-covered hills and gay regions of France," erect and satisfied; for the image of man was not cast down and chained to the foot of arbitrary thrones: I was at no loss for language, for that of all the great schools of painting was open to me. The whole is vanished like a shade. Pictures, heroes, glory, freedom, all are fled: nothing remains but the Bourbons and the French people!—There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else; but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our

habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream or another state of existence, does not pass into our daily modes of life. It is an animated, but a momentary, hallucination. It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity; and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must "jump" all our present comforts and connections. Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated. Dr. Johnson remarked how little foreign travel added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful and, in one sense, instructive; but it appears to be cut out of our substantial, downright existence; and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings:

Out of my country and myself I go.

Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them; but we can be said only to fulfil our destiny in the place that gave us birth. I should on this account like well enough to spend the whole of my life in travelling abroad, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend afterwards at home!

## THE INDIAN JUGGLERS.

(From "Table-Talk," 1821-1822.)

Coming forward and seating himself on the ground in his white dress and tightened turban, the chief of the Indian jugglers begins with tossing up two brass balls, which is what any of us could do, and concludes with keeping up four at the same time, which is what none of us could do

to save our lives, nor if we were to take our whole lives to do it in. Is it then a trifling power we see at work, or is it not something next to miraculous? It is the utmost stretch of human ingenuity, which nothing but the bending the faculties of body and mind to it from the tenderest infancy with incessant, ever-anxious application up to manhood can accomplish or make even a slight approach to. Man, thou art a wonderful animal, and thy ways past finding out! Thou canst do strange things, but thou turnest them to little account!—To conceive of this effort of extraordinary dexterity distracts the imagination and makes admiration breathless. Yet it costs nothing to the performer, any more than if it were a mere mechanical deception with which he had nothing to do but to watch and laugh at the astonishment of the spectators. A single error of a hair's-breadth, of the smallest conceivable portion of time, would be fatal: the precision of the movements must be like a mathematical truth, their rapidity is like lightning. To catch four balls in succession in less than a second of time, and deliver them back so as to return with seeming consciousness to the hand again; to make them revolve round him at certain intervals, like the planets in their spheres; to make them chase one another like sparkles of fire, or shoot up like flowers or meteors; to throw them behind his back and twine them round his neck like ribbons or like serpents; to do what appears an impossibility, and do it with all the ease, the grace, the carelessness imaginable; to laugh at, to play with the glittering mockeries; to follow them with his eye as if he could fascinate them with its lambent fire, or as if he had only to see that they kept time with the music on the stage—there is something in all this which he who does not admire may be quite sure he never really admired anything in the whole course of his life. It is skill surmounting difficulty, and beauty triumphing over skill. It seems as if the difficulty once mastered naturally resolved itself into

ease and grace, and as if to be overcome at all, it must be overcome without an effort. The smallest awkwardness or want of pliancy or self-possession would stop the whole process. It is the work of witchcraft, and yet sport for children. Some of the other feats are quite as curious and wonderful, such as the balancing the artificial tree and shooting a bird from each branch through a quill; though none of them have the elegance or facility of the keeping up of the brass balls. You are in pain for the result, and glad when the experiment is over; they are not accompanied with the same unmixed, unchecked delight as the former; and I would not give much to be merely astonished without being pleased at the same time. As to the swallowing of the sword, the police ought to interfere to prevent it. When I saw the Indian Juggler do the same things before, his feet were bare, and he had large rings on the toes, which kept turning round all the time of the performance, as if they moved of themselves.—The hearing a speech in Parliament drawled or stammered out by the Honourable Member or the Noble Lord; the ringing the changes on their common-places, which any one could repeat after them as well as they, stirs me not a jot, shakes not my good opinion of myself; but the seeing the Indian Jugglers does. It makes me ashamed of myself. I ask what there is that I can do as well as this? Nothing. What have I been doing all my life? Have I been idle, or have I nothing to show for all my labour and pains? Or have I passed my time in pouring words like water into empty sieves, rolling a stone up a hill and then down again, trying to prove an argument in the teeth of facts, and looking for causes in the dark and not finding them? Is there no one thing in which I can challenge competition, that I can bring as an instance of exact perfection in which others cannot find a flaw? The utmost I can pretend to is to write a description of what this fellow can do. I can write a book: so can many others who have not even learned to spell. What abortions are



these Essays! What errors, what ill-pieced transitions, what crooked reasons, what lame conclusions! How little is made out, and that little how ill! Yet they are the best I can do. I endeavour to recollect all I have ever observed or thought upon a subject, and to express it as nearly as I can. Instead of writing on four subjects at a time, it is as much as I can manage to keep the thread of one discourse clear and unentangled. I have also time on my hands to correct my opinions, and polish my periods; but the one I cannot, and the other I will not do. I am fond of arguing: yet with a good deal of pains and practice it is often as much as I can do to beat my man: though he may be an indifferent hand. A common fencer would disarm his adversary in the twinkling of an eye, unless he were a professor like himself. A stroke of wit will sometimes produce this effect, but there is no such power of superiority in sense or reasoning. There is no complete mastery of execution to be shown there; and you hardly know the professor from the impudent pretender or the mere clown.

I have always had this feeling of the inefficacy and slow progress of intellectual compared to mechanical excellence, and it has always made me somewhat dissatisfied. It is a great many years since I saw Richer, the famous rope-dancer, perform at Sadler's Wells. He was matchless in his art, and added to his extraordinary skill exquisite ease, and unaffected natural grace. I was at that time employed in copying a half-length picture of Sir Joshua Reynolds; and it put me out of conceit with it. How ill this part was made out in the drawing! How heavy, how slovenly this other was painted! I could not help saying to myself, "If the rope-dancer had performed his task in this manner, leaving so many gaps and botches in his work, he would have broken his neck long ago; I should never have seen that vigorous elasticity of nerve and precision of movement!" —Is it, then, so easy an undertaking (comparatively) to dance on a tight-rope? Let any one who thinks so get up and try.

There is the thing. It is that which at first we cannot do at all which in the end is done to such perfection. To account for this in some degree, I might observe that mechanical dexterity is confined to doing some one particular thing, which you can repeat as often as you please, in which you know whether you succeed or fail, and where the point of perfection consists in succeeding in a given undertaking. —In mechanical efforts you improve by perpetual practice, and you do so infallibly, because the object to be attained is not a matter of taste or fancy or opinion, but of actual experiment, in which you must either do the thing or not do it. If a man is put to aim at a mark with a bow and arrow, he must hit it or miss it, that's certain. He cannot deceive himself, and go on shooting wide or falling short and still fancy that he is making progress. The distinction between right and wrong, between true and false, is here palpable; and he must either correct his aim or persevere in his error with his eyes open, for which there is neither excuse nor temptation. If a man is learning to dance on a rope, if he does not mind what he is about he will break his neck. After that it will be in vain for him to argue that he did not make a false step. His situation is not like that of Goldsmith's pedagogue:—

In argument they own'd his wondrous skill,  
And e'en though vanquish'd, he could argue still. <sup>1</sup>

Danger is a good teacher, and makes apt scholars. So are disgrace, defeat, exposure to immediate scorn and laughter. There is no opportunity in such cases for self-delusion, no idling time away, no being off your guard (or you must take the consequences)—neither is there any room for humour or caprice or prejudice. If the Indian Juggler were to play tricks in throwing up the three case-knives, which keep their positions like the leaves of a crocus in the air, he would cut his fingers. I can make a very bad antithesis without

<sup>1</sup> "The Deserted Village," 211-212.

cutting my fingers. The tact of style is more ambiguous than that of double-edged instruments. If the Juggler were told that by flinging himself under the wheels of the Juggernaut, when the idol issues forth on a gaudy day, he would immediately be transported into Paradise, he might believe it, and nobody could disprove it. So the Brahmins may say what they please on that subject, may build up dogmas and mysteries without end, and not be detected; but their ingenious countryman cannot persuade the frequenters of the Olympic Theatre that he performs a number of astonishing feats without actually giving proofs of what he says.—There is, then, in this sort of manual dexterity, first a gradual aptitude acquired to a given exertion of muscular power, from constant repetition, and in the next place an exact knowledge how much is still wanting and necessary to be supplied. The obvious test is to increase the effort or nicety of the operation, and still to find it come true. The muscles ply instinctively to the dictates of habit. Certain movements and impressions of the hand and eye, having been repeated together an infinite number of times, are unconsciously but unavoidably cemented into closer and closer union; the limbs require little more than to be put in motion for them to follow a regular track with ease and certainty; so that the mere intention of the will acts mathematically like touching the spring of a machine, and you come with Locksley in "Ivanhoe," in shooting at a mark, "to allow for the wind."

Further, what is meant by perfection in mechanical exercises is the performing certain feats to a uniform nicety, that is, in fact, undertaking no more than you can perform. You task yourself, the limit you fix is optional, and no more than human industry and skill can attain to; but you have no abstract, independent standard of difficulty or excellence (other than the extent of your own powers). Thus he who can keep up four brass balls does this to *perfection*; but he cannot keep up five at the same instant, and would fail every

time he attempted it. That is, the mechanical performer undertakes to emulate himself, not to equal another.<sup>1</sup> But the artist undertakes to imitate another, or to do what Nature has done, and this, it appears, is more difficult, viz. to copy what she has set before us in the face of nature or "human face divine," entire and without a blemish, than to keep up four brass balls at the same instant, for the one is done by the power of human skill and industry, and the other never was nor will be. Upon the whole, therefore, I have more respect for Reynolds than I have for Richer; for happen how it will, there have been more people in the world who can dance on a rope like the one than who could paint like Sir Joshua. The latter was but a bungler in his profession to the other, it is true; but then he had a harder taskmaster to obey, whose will was more wayward and obscure, and whose instructions it was more difficult to practise. You can put a child apprentice to a tumbler or rope-dancer with a comfortable prospect of success, if they are but sound of wind and limb; but you cannot do the same thing in painting. The odds are a million to one. You may make indeed as many Haydons and H——s as you put into that sort of machine, but not one Reynolds amongst them all, with his grace, his grandeur, his blandness of gusto, "in tones and gestures hit," unless you could make the man over again. To snatch this grace beyond the reach of art is then the height of art—where fine art begins, and where mechanical skill ends. The soft suffusion of the soul, the speechless breathing eloquence, the looks "commercing with the skies," the ever-shifting forms of an eternal principle, that which is seen but for a moment, but dwells in the heart always, and is only seized as it passes, by strong and secret sympathy, must be taught by nature and genius, not by rules of study. It is suggested by feeling, not by laborious microscopic inspection; in seeking for it without we lose the

<sup>1</sup> If two persons play against each other at any game, one of them necessarily fails.

harmonious clue to it within; and in aiming to grasp the substance, we let the very spirit of art evaporate. In a word, the objects of fine art are not the objects of sight, but as these last are the objects of taste and imagination, that is, as they appeal to the sense of beauty, of pleasure, and of power in the human breast, and are explained by that finer sense, and revealed in their inner structure to the eye in return. Nature is also a language. Objects, like words, have a meaning; and the true artist is the interpreter of this language, which he can only do by knowing its application to a thousand other objects in a thousand other situations. Thus the eye is too blind a guide of itself to distinguish between the warm or cold tone of a deep-blue sky; but another sense acts as a monitor to it and does not err. The colour of the leaves in autumn would be nothing without the feeling that accompanies it; but it is that feeling that stamps them on the canvas, faded, seared, blighted, shrinking from the winter's flaw, and makes the sight as true as touch—

And visions, as poetic eyes avow,  
Cling to each leaf and hang on every bough.

The more ethereal, evanescent, more refined and sublime part of art is the seeing Nature through the medium of sentiment and passion, as each object is a symbol of the affections and a link in the chain of our endless being. But the unravelling this mysterious web of thought and feeling is alone in the Muse's gift, namely, in the power of that trembling sensibility which is awake to every change and every modification of its ever-varying impressions, that

Thrills in each nerve, and lives along the line.

This power is indifferently called genius, imagination, feeling, taste: but the manner in which it acts upon the mind can neither be defined by abstract rules, as is the case in science, nor verified by continual, unvarying experiments, as is the case in mechanical performances. The mechanical excel-

lence of the Dutch painters in colouring and handling is that which comes the nearest in fine art to the perfection of certain manual exhibitions of skill. The truth of the effect and the facility with which it is produced are equally admirable. Up to a certain point everything is faultless. The hand and eye have done their part. There is only a want of taste and genius. It is after we enter upon that enchanted ground that the human mind begins to droop and flag as in a strange road, or in a thick mist, benighted and making little way with many attempts and many failures, and that the best of us can only escape with half a triumph. The undefined and the imaginary are the regions that we must pass like Satan, difficult and doubtful, "half flying, half on foot." The object in sense is a positive thing, and execution comes with practice.

Cleverness is a certain *knack* or aptitude at doing certain things, which depend more on a particular adroitness and off-hand readiness than on force or perseverance, such as making puns, making epigrams, making extempore verses, mimicking the company, mimicking a style, etc. Cleverness is either liveliness and smartness, or something answering to *slight of hand*, like letting a glass fall sideways off a table, or else a trick, like knowing the secret spring of a watch. Accomplishments are certain external graces, which are to be learned from others, and which are easily displayed to the admiration of the beholder, viz. dancing, riding, fencing, music, and so on. These ornamental acquirements are only proper to those who are at ease in mind and fortune. I know an individual who, if he had been born to an estate of five thousand a year, would have been the most accomplished gentleman of the age. He would have been the delight and envy of the circle in which he moved—would have graced by his manners the liberality flowing from the openness of his heart, would have laughed with the women, have argued with the men, have said good things and written agreeable ones, have taken a hand at piquet or the

lead at the harpsichord, and have set and sung his own verses — *nugæ canoræ* — with tenderness and spirit; a Rochester without the vice, a modern Surrey! As it is, all these capabilities of excellence stand in his way. He is too versatile for a professional man, not dull enough for a political drudge, too gay to be happy, too thoughtless to be rich. He wants the enthusiasm of the poet, the severity of the prose-writer, and the application of the man of business. — Talent is the capacity of doing anything that depends on application and industry, such as writing a criticism, making a speech, studying the law. Talent differs from genius as voluntary differs from involuntary power. Ingenuity is genius in trifles; greatness is genius in undertakings of much pith and moment. A clever or ingenious man is one who can do anything well, whether it is worth doing or not; a great man is one who can do that which when done is of the highest importance. Themistocles said he could not play on the flute, but that he could make of a small city a great one. This gives one a pretty good idea of the distinction in question.

Greatness is great power, producing great effects. It is not enough that a man has great power in himself; he must show it to all the world in a way that cannot be hid or gain-said. He must fill up a certain idea in the public mind. I have no other notion of greatness than this twofold definition, great result springing from great inherent energy. The great in visible objects has relation to that which extends over space; the great in mental ones has to do with space and time. No man is truly great who is great only in his lifetime. The test of greatness is the page of history. Nothing can be said to be great that has a distinct limit, or that borders on something evidently greater than itself. Besides, what is short-lived and pampered into mere notoriety is of a gross and vulgar quality in itself. A Lord Mayor is hardly a great man. A city orator or patriot of the day only show, by reaching the height of their wishes,

the distance they are at from any true ambition. Popularity is neither fame nor greatness. A king (as such) is not a great man. He has great power, but it is not his own. He merely wields the lever of the state, which a child, an idiot, or a madman can do. It is the office, not the man, we gaze at. Any one else in the same situation would be just as much an object of abject curiosity. We laugh at the country girl who having seen a king expressed her disappointment by saying, "Why, he is only a man!" Yet, knowing this, we run to see a king as if he was something more than a man.—To display the greatest powers, unless they are applied to great purposes, makes nothing for the character of greatness. To throw a barleycorn through the eye of a needle, to multiply nine figures by nine in the memory, argues definite dexterity of body and capacity of mind, but nothing comes of either. There is a surprising power at work, but the effects are not proportionate, or such as take hold of the imagination. To impress the idea of power on others, they must be made in some way to feel it. It must be communicated to their understandings in the shape of an increase of knowledge, or it must subdue and overawe them by subjecting their wills. Admiration to be solid and lasting must be founded on proofs from which we have no means of escaping; it is neither a slight nor a voluntary gift. A mathematician who solves a profound problem, a poet who creates an image of beauty in the mind that was not there before, imparts knowledge and power to others, in which his greatness and his fame consists, and on which it reposes. Jedediah Buxton will be forgotten; but Napier's bones will live. Lawgivers, philosophers, founders of religion, conquerors and heroes, inventors and great geniuses in arts and sciences, are great men; for they are great public benefactors, or formidable scourges to mankind. Among ourselves, Shakespear, Newton, Bacon, Milton, Cromwell, were great men, for they showed great power by acts and thoughts, which have not yet been consigned to oblivion.



They must needs be men of lofty stature, whose shadows lengthen out to remote posterity. A great farce-writer may be a great man; for Molière was but a great farce writer. In my mind, the author of "Don Quixote" was a great man. So have there been many others. A great chess-player is not a great man, for he leaves the world as he found it. No act terminating in itself constitutes greatness. This will apply to all displays of power or trials of skill which are confined to the momentary, individual effort, and construct no permanent image or trophy of themselves without them. Is not an actor then a great man, because "he dies and leaves the world no copy?" I must make an exception for Mrs. Siddons, or else give up my definition of greatness for her sake. A man at the top of his profession is not therefore a great man. He is great in his way, but that is all, unless he shows the marks of a great moving intellect, so that we trace the master-mind, and can sympathise with the springs that urge him on. The rest is but a craft or *mystery*. John Hunter was a great man—that any one might see without the smallest skill in surgery. His style and manner showed the man. He would set about cutting up the carcass of a whale with the same greatness of gusto that Michael Angelo would have hewn a block of marble. Lord Nelson was a great naval commander; but, for myself, I have not much opinion of a seafaring life. Sir Humphry Davy is a great chemist, but I am not sure that he is a great man. I am not a bit the wiser for any of his discoveries, nor I never met with any one that was. But it is in the nature of greatness to propagate an idea in itself, as wave impels wave, circle without circle. It is a contradiction in terms for a coxcomb to be a great man. A really great man has always an idea of something greater than himself. I have observed that certain sectaries and polemical writers have no higher compliment to pay their most shining lights than to say that "Such a one was a considerable man in his day." Some new elucidation of a text sets aside the authority of the old

Mr. Jenkins of Whitechurch (nine miles farther on), according to the custom of Dissenting Ministers in each other's neighbourhood. A line of communication is thus established, by which the flame of civil and religious liberty is kept alive, and nourishes its smouldering fire unquenchable, like the fires in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, placed at different stations, that waited for ten long years to announce with their blazing pyramids the destruction of Troy. Coleridge had agreed to come over and see my father, according to the courtesy of the country, as Mr. Rowe's probable successor; but in the meantime, I had gone to hear him preach the Sunday after his arrival. A poet and a philosopher getting up into a Unitarian pulpit to preach the gospel was a romance in these degenerate days, a sort of revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity, which was not to be resisted.

It was in January of 1798, that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798. *Il y a des impressions que ni le tems ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dussé-je vivre des siècles entiers le doux tems de ma jeunesse ne peut renaitre pour moi, ni s'effacer jamais dans ma mémoire.*<sup>1</sup> When I got there, the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done, Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, "And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE." As he gave out this text, his voice "rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes," and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into my mind, "of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts and wild honey." The preacher then launched into his subject,

<sup>1</sup> See Rousseau, "Confessions."

like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon church and state—not their alliance, but their separation—on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had “inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore.” He made a poetical and pastoral excursion—and to show the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd-boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, “as though he should never be old,” and the same poor country lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood:

Such were the notes our once-loved poet sung.<sup>1</sup>

And for myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together. Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion. This was even beyond my hopes. I returned home well satisfied. The sun that was still labouring pale and wan through the sky, obscured by thick mists, seemed an emblem of the *good cause*; and the cold dank drops of dew, that hung half melted on the beard of the thistle, had something genial and refreshing in them; for there was a spirit of hope and youth in all nature, that turned everything into good. The face of nature had not then the brand of *JUS DIVINUM* on it:

Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.<sup>2</sup>

On the Tuesday following, the half-inspired speaker came. I was called down into the room where he was, and went half-hoping, half-afraid. He received me very graciously, and I listened for a long time without uttering a word. I

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pope, “Epistle to the Earl of Oxford,” 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Milton, “Lycidas,” 106.

did not suffer in his opinion by my silence. "For those two hours," he afterwards was pleased to say, "he was conversing with William Hazlitt's forehead!" His appearance was different from what I had anticipated from seeing him before. At a distance, and in the dim light of the chapel, there was to me a strange wildness in his aspect, a dusky obscurity, and I thought him pitted with the small-pox. His complexion was at that time clear, and even bright—

At are the children of yon azure sheen.<sup>1</sup>

His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them, like a sea with darkened lustre. "A certain tender bloom his face o'erspread," a purple tinge as we see it in the pale, thoughtful complexions of the Spanish portrait-painters, Murillo and Velasquez. His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his chin good-humoured and round; but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done. It might seem that the genius of his face as from a height surveyed and projected him (with sufficient capacity and huge aspiration) into the world unknown of thought and imagination, with nothing to support or guide his veering purpose, as if Columbus had launched his adventurous course for the New World in a shallop, without oars or compass. So, at least, I comment on it after the event. Coleridge, in his person, was rather above the common size, inclining to the corpulent, or like Lord Hamlet, "somewhat fat and porsy." His hair (now, alas! grey) was then black and glossy as the raven's, and fell in smooth masses over his forehead. This long pendulous hair is peculiar to enthusiasts, to those whose minds tend heavenward; and is traditionally inseparable (though of a different colour) from the pictures of Christ. It ought to belong, as a character, to all who preach *Christ crucified*, and Coleridge was at that time one of those!

<sup>1</sup> See Thomson, "Castle of Indolence," ii. 33, 7.

It was curious to observe the contrast between him and my father, who was a veteran in the cause, and then declining into the vale of years.

No two individuals were ever more unlike than were the host and his guest. A poet was to my father a sort of nondescript; yet whatever added grace to the Unitarian cause was to him welcome. He could hardly have been more surprised or pleased if our visitor had worn wings. Indeed, his thoughts had wings: and as the silken sounds rustled round our little wainscoted parlour, my father threw back his spectacles over his forehead, his white hairs mixing with its sanguine hue: and a smile of delight beamed across his rugged, cordial face, to think that Truth had found a new ally in Fancy! Besides, Coleridge seemed to take considerable notice of me, and that of itself was enough. He talked very familiarly, but agreeably, and glanced over a variety of subjects. At dinner-time he grew more animated, and dilated in a very edifying manner on Mary Wolstonecraft<sup>1</sup> and Mackintosh. The last, he said, he considered (on my father's speaking of his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* as a capital performance) as a clever, scholastic man—a master of the topics—or, as the ready warehouseman of letters, who knew exactly where to lay his hand on what he wanted, though the goods were not his own. He thought him no match for Burke, either in style or matter. Burke was a metaphysician, Mackintosh a mere logician. Burke was an orator (almost a poet) who reasoned in figures, because he had an eye for nature: Mackintosh, on the other hand, was a rhetorician, who had only an eye to commonplaces. On this I ventured to say that I had always entertained a great opinion of Burke, and that (as far as I could find) the speaking of him with contempt might be made the test of a vulgar, democratical mind. This was the first observation I ever made to Coleridge, and he said it was a very just and striking one. I remember the leg of Welsh mutton

<sup>1</sup> Wife of William Godwin.

and the turnips on the table that day had the finest flavour imaginable. Coleridge added that Mackintosh and Tom Wedgwood (of whom, however, he spoke highly) had expressed a very indifferent opinion of his friend Mr. Wordsworth, on which he remarked to them—"He strides on so far before you, that he dwindles in the distance!" Godwin had once boasted to him of having carried on an argument with Mackintosh for three hours with dubious success. Coleridge told him—"If there had been a man of genius in the room he would have settled the question in five minutes." He asked me if I had ever seen Mary Wolstonecraft, and I said, I had once for a few moments, and that she seemed to me to turn off Godwin's objections to something she advanced with quite a playful, easy air. He replied, that "this was only one instance of the ascendancy which people of imagination exercised over those of mere intellect." He did not rate Godwin very high (this was caprice, or prejudice, real or affected), but he had a great idea of Mrs. Wolstonecraft's powers of conversation; none at all of her talent for bookmaking. We talked a little about Holcroft. He had been asked if he was not much struck *with* him, and he said, he thought himself in more danger of being struck *by* him. I complained that he would not let me get on at all, for he required a definition of even the commonest word, exclaiming, "What do you mean by a *sensation*, Sir? What do you mean by an *idea*?" This, Coleridge said, was barricading the road to truth; it was setting up a turnpike-gate at every step we took. I forget a great number of things, many more than I remember; but the day passed off pleasantly, and the next morning Mr. Coleridge was to return to Shrewsbury. When I came down to breakfast, I found that he had just received a letter from his friend, T. Wedgwood, making him an offer of £150 a year if he chose to waive his present pursuit, and devote himself entirely to the study of poetry and philosophy. Coleridge seemed to make up his mind to close with this proposal in

the act of tying on one of his shoes. It threw an additional damp on his departure. It took the wayward enthusiast quite from us to cast him into Deva's winding vales, or by the shores of old romance. Instead of living at ten miles distance, of being the pastor of a Dissenting congregation at Shrewsbury, he was henceforth to inhabit the Hill of Parnassus, to be a Shepherd on the Delectable Mountains. Alas! I knew not the way thither, and felt very little gratitude for Mr. Wedgwood's bounty. I was presently relieved from this dilemma; for Mr. Coleridge, asking for a pen and ink, and going to a table to write something on a bit of card, advanced towards me with undulating step, and giving me the precious document, said that that was his address, *Mr. Coleridge, Nether Stowey, Somersetshire*, and that he should be glad to see me there in a few weeks' time, and, if I chose, would come half-way to meet me. I was not less surprised than the shepherd-boy (this simile is to be found in *Cassandra*), when he sees a thunderbolt fall close at his feet. I stammered out my acknowledgments and acceptance of this offer (I thought Mr. Wedgwood's annuity a trifle to it) as well as I could; and this mighty business being settled, the poet preacher took leave, and I accompanied him six miles on the road. It was a fine morning in the middle of winter, and he talked the whole way. The scholar in Chaucer is described as going

. . . Sounding on his way.

So Coleridge went on his. In digressing, in dilating, in passing from subject to subject, he appeared to me to float in air, to slide on ice. I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the footpath to the other. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since. He seemed unable to keep on in a straight line. We parted at the six-mile stone; and I returned homeward, pensive,

but much pleased. I had met with unexpected notice from a person whom I believed to have been prejudiced against me. "Kind and affable to me had been his condescension, and should be honoured ever with suitable regard." He was the first poet I had known, and he certainly answered to that inspired name. I had heard a great deal of his powers of conversation and was not disappointed. In fact, I never met with anything at all like them, either before or since. I could easily credit the accounts which were circulated of his holding forth to a large party of ladies and gentlemen, an evening or two before, on the Berkeleian<sup>1</sup> Theory, when he made the whole material universe look like a transparency of fine words; and another story (which I believe he has somewhere told himself) of his being asked to a party at Birmingham, of his smoking tobacco and going to sleep after dinner on a sofa, where the company found him, to their no small surprise, which was increased to wonder when he started up of a sudden, and rubbing his eyes, looked about him, and launched into a three hours' description of the third heaven, of which he had had a dream, very different from Mr. Southey's "Vision of Judgment," and also from that other "Vision of Judgment,"<sup>2</sup> which Mr. Murray, the Secretary of the Bridge-street Junta,<sup>3</sup> took into his especial keeping.

On my way back I had a sound in my ears—it was the voice of Fancy; I had a light before me—it was the face of Poetry. The one still lingers there, the other has not quitted my side! Coleridge, in truth, met me half-way on the ground of philosophy, or I should not have been won over to his imaginative creed. I had an uneasy, pleasurable sensation all the time, till I was to visit him. During those months the chill breath of winter gave me a welcoming; the vernal air was balm and inspiration to me. The golden sunsets,

<sup>1</sup> George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne (1685-1753), expounded a new theory of metaphysics. He denied the existence of matter or substance.

<sup>2</sup> By Byron.

<sup>3</sup> An allusion to the recently-established *Quarterly Review*.



Nether Stowey is beautiful, green and hilly, and near the sea-shore. I saw it but the other day, after an interval of twenty years, from a hill near Taunton. How was the map of my life spread out before me, as the map of the country lay at my feet! In the afternoon, Coleridge took me over to All-Foxden, a romantic old family mansion of the St Aubins, where Wordsworth lived. It was then in the possession of a friend of the poet's, who gave him the free use of it. Somehow, that period (the time just after the French Revolution) was not a time when *nothing was given for nothing*. The mind opened and a softness might be perceived coming over the heart of individuals, beneath "the scales that fence" our self-interest. Wordsworth himself was from home, but his sister kept house, and set before us a frugal repast; and we had free access to her brother's poems, the "Lyrical Ballads," which were still in manuscript, or in the form of "Sybilline Leaves." I dipped into a few of these with great satisfaction, and with the faith of a novice. I slept that night in an old room with blue hangings, and covered with the round-faced family portraits of the age of George I. and II., and from the wooded declivity of the adjoining park that overlooked my window, at the dawn of day, could

. . . hear the loud stag speak.

In the outset of life (and particularly at this time I felt it so) our imagination has a body to it. We are in a state between sleeping and waking, and have indistinct but glorious glimpses of strange shapes, and there is always something to come better than what we see. As in our dreams the fulness of the blood gives warmth and reality to the coinage of the brain, so in youth our ideas are clothed, and fed, and pampered with our good spirits; we breathe thick with thoughtless happiness, the weight of future years presses on the strong pulses of the heart, and we repose with undisturbed faith in truth and good. As we advance, we

exhaust our fund of enjoyment and of hope. We are no longer wrapped in *lamb's-wool*, lulled in Elysium. As we taste the pleasures of life, their spirit evaporates, the sense palls; and nothing is left but the phantoms, the lifeless shadows of what *has been*!

That morning, as soon as breakfast was over, we strolled out into the park, and seating ourselves on the trunk of an old ash tree that stretched along the ground, Coleridge read aloud, with a sonorous and musical voice the ballad of "Betty Foy." I was not critically or sceptically inclined. I saw touches of truth and nature, and took the rest for granted. But in the "Thorn," the "Mad Mother," and the "Complaint of a Poor Indian Woman," I felt that deeper power and pathos which have been since acknowledged,

*In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,<sup>1</sup>*

as the characteristics of this author; and the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me. It had to me something of the effect that arises from the turning up of the fresh soil, or of the first welcome breath of Spring:

While yet the trembling year is unconfirmed.<sup>2</sup>

Coleridge and myself walked back to Stowey that evening, and his voice sounded high

Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,  
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,<sup>3</sup>

as we passed through echoing grove, by fairy stream or waterfall, gleaming in the summer moonlight! He lamented that Wordsworth was not prone enough to believe in the traditional superstitions of the place, and that there was a something corporeal, a *matter-of-fact-ness*, a clinging to the palpable, or often to the petty, in his poetry, in consequence. His genius was not a spirit that descended to him through the air; it sprung out of the ground like a flower, or un-

<sup>1</sup> Pope, "Essay on Man," i. 293.

<sup>2</sup> Thomson, "The Seasons," "Spring," 18.

<sup>3</sup> Milton, "Paradise Lost," ii. 559-560.

folded itself from a green spray, on which the goldfinch sang. He said, however (if I remember right), that this objection must be confined to his descriptive pieces, that his philosophic poetry had a grand and comprehensive spirit in it, so that his soul seemed to inhabit the universe like a palace, and to discover truth by intuition, rather than by deduction. The next day Wordsworth arrived from Bristol at Coleridge's cottage. I think I see him now. He answered in some degree to his friend's description of him, but was more gaunt and Don Quixote-like. He was quaintly dressed (according to the *costume* of that unconstrained period) in a brown fustian jacket and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own "Peter Bell." There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than the outward appearance), an intense, high, narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face. Chantrey's bust wants the marking traits; but he was teased into making it regular and heavy: Haydon's head of him, introduced into the "Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem," is the most like his drooping weight of thought and expression. He sat down and talked very naturally and freely, with a mixture of clear, gushing accents in his voice, a deep guttural intonation, and a strong tincture of the northern *bur*, like the crust on wine. He instantly began to make havoc of the half of a Cheshire cheese on the table, and said, triumphantly, that "his marriage with experience had not been so productive as Mr. Southey's in teaching him a knowledge of the good things of this life." He had been to see the "Castle Spectre" by Monk Lewis, while at Bristol, and described it very well. He said "it fitted the taste of the audience like a glove." This *ad captandum* merit was

however by no means a recommendation of it, according to the severe principles of the new school, which reject rather than court popular effect. Wordsworth, looking out of the low, latticed window, said, "How beautifully the sun sets on that yellow bank!" I thought within myself, "with what eyes these poets see nature!" and ever after, when I saw the sun-set stream upon the objects facing it, conceived I had made a discovery, or thanked Mr. Wordsworth for having made one for me! We went over to All-Foxden again the day following, and Wordsworth read us the story of "Peter Bell" in the open air; and the comment upon it by his face and voice was very different from that of some later critics! Whatever might be thought of the poem, "his face was as a book where men might read strange matters," and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones. There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*. Coleridge has told me that he himself liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption. Returning that same evening, I got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth, while Coleridge was explaining the different notes of the nightingale to his sister, in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible. Thus I passed three weeks at Nether Stowey and in the neighbourhood, generally devoting the afternoons to a delightful chat in an arbour made of bark by the poet's friend Tom Poole, sitting under two fine elm

trees, and listening to the bees humming round us, while we quaffed our *flip*. It was agreed, among other things, that we should make a jaunt down the Bristol Channel, as far as Linton. We set off together on foot, Coleridge, John Chester, and I. This Chester was a native of Nether Stowey, one of those who were attracted to Coleridge's discourse as flies are to honey, or bees in swarming-time to the sound of a brass pan. He "followed in the chase like a dog who hunts, not like one that made up the cry." He had on a brown cloth coat, boots, and corduroy breeches, was low in stature, bow-legged, had a drag in his walk like a drover, which he assisted by a hazel switch, and kept on a sort of trot by the side of Coleridge, like a running footman by a state coach, that he might not lose a syllable or sound that fell from Coleridge's lips. He told me his private opinion that Coleridge was a wonderful man. He scarcely opened his lips, much less offered an opinion the whole way; yet of the three, had I to choose during that journey, I would be John Chester. He afterwards followed Coleridge into Germany, where the Kantian philosophers were puzzled how to bring him under any of their categories. When he sat down at table with his idol, John's felicity was complete, Sir Walter Scott's or Mr. Blackwood's when they sat down at the same table with the King, was not more so. We passed Dunster on our right, a small town between the brow of a hill and the sea. I remember eyeing it wistfully as it lay below us: contrasted with the woody scene around, it looked as clear, as pure, as *embrowned* and ideal as any landscape I have seen since of Gaspar Poussin's or Domenichino's. We had a long day's march (our feet kept time to the echoes of Coleridge's tongue) through Minehead and by the Blue Anchor, and on to Lynton, which we did not reach till near midnight, and where we had some difficulty in making a lodgment. We, however, knocked the people of the house up at last, and we were repaid for our apprehensions and fatigue by some excellent rashers of fried bacon and eggs.

The view in coming along had been splendid. We walked for miles and miles in dark brown heaths overlooking the Channel, with the Welsh hills beyond, and at times descended into little sheltered valleys close by the seaside, with a smuggler's face scowling by us, and then had to ascend conical hills with a path winding up through a coppice to a barren top, like a monk's shaven crown, from one of which I pointed out to Coleridge's notice the bare masts of a vessel on the very edge of the horizon, and within the red-orbed disk of the setting sun, like his own spectre-ship in the "Ancient Mariner." At Lynton the character of the sea-coast becomes more marked and rugged. There is a place called the *Valley of Rocks* (I suspect this was only the poetical name for it), bedded among precipices overhanging the sea, with rocky caverns beneath, into which the waves dash, and where the sea-gull for ever wheels its screaming flight. On the tops of these are huge stones thrown transverse, as if an earthquake had tossed them there, and behind these is a fretwork of perpendicular rocks, something like the "Giant's Causeway." A thunder-storm came on while we were at the inn, and Coleridge was running out bare-headed to enjoy the commotion of the elements in the "Valley of Rocks," but, as if in spite, the clouds only muttered a few angry sounds, and let fall a few refreshing drops. Coleridge told me that he and Wordsworth were to have made this place the scene of a prose-tale, which was to have been in the manner of, but far superior to, the "Death of Abel," but they had relinquished the design. In the morning of the second day, we breakfasted luxuriously in an old-fashioned parlour on tea, toast, eggs, and honey, in the very sight of the bee-hives from which it had been taken, and a garden full of thyme and wild flowers that had produced it. On this occasion Coleridge spoke of Virgil's "Georgics," but not well. I do not think he had much feeling for the classical or elegant. It was in this room that we found a little worn-out copy of the "Seasons," lying in a window-

seat, on which Coleridge exclaimed, "*That is true fame!*" He said Thomson was a great poet, rather than a good one; his style was as meretricious as his thoughts were natural. He spoke of Cowper as the best modern poet. He said the "*Lyrical Ballads*" were an experiment about to be tried by him and Wordsworth, to see how far the public taste would endure poetry written in a more natural and simple style than had hitherto been attempted; totally discarding the artifices of poetical diction, and making use only of such words as had probably been common in the most ordinary language since the days of Henry II. Some comparison was introduced between Shakespeare and Milton. He said "he hardly knew which to prefer. Shakespeare appeared to him a mere stripling in the art; he was as tall and as strong, with infinitely more activity than Milton, but he never appeared to have come to man's estate; or if he had, he would not have been a man, but a monster." He spoke with contempt of Gray, and with intolerance of Pope. He did not like the versification of the latter. He observed that "the ears of these couplet writers might be charged with having short memories, that could not retain the harmony of whole passages." He thought little of Junius as a writer; he had a dislike of Dr. Johnson; and a much higher opinion of Burke as an orator and politician, than of Fox or Pitt. He, however, thought him very inferior in richness of style and imagery to some of our elder prose-writers, particularly Jeremy Taylor. He liked Richardson, but not Fielding; nor could I get him to enter into the merits of "*Caleb Williams*." In short, he was profound and discriminating with respect to those authors whom he liked, and where he gave his judgment fair play; capricious, perverse, and prejudiced in his antipathies and distastes. We loitered on the "*ribbed sea-sands*," in such talk as this a whole morning, and, I recollect, met with a curious seaweed, of which John Chester told us the country name! A fisherman gave Coleridge an account of a boy that had been

drowned the day before, and that they had tried to save him at the risk of their own lives. He said "he did not know how it was that they ventured, but, Sir, we have a *nature* towards one another." This expression, Coleridge remarked to me, was a fine illustration of that theory of disinterestedness which I (in common with Butler) had adopted. I broached to him an argument of mine to prove that *likeness* was not mere association of ideas. I said that the mark in the sand put one in mind of a man's foot, not because it was part of a former impression of a man's foot (for it was quite new), but because it was like the shape of a man's foot. He assented to the justness of this distinction (which I have explained at length elsewhere, for the benefit of the curious) and John Chester listened; not from any interest in the subject, but because he was astonished that I should be able to suggest anything to Coleridge that he did not already know. We returned on the third morning, and Coleridge remarked the silent cottage smoke curling up the valleys where, a few evenings before, we had seen the lights gleaming through the dark.

In a day or two after we arrived at Stowey, we set out, I on my return home, and he for Germany. It was a Sunday morning, and he was to preach that day for Dr. Toulmin of Taunton. I asked him if he had prepared anything for the occasion? He said he had not even thought of the text, but should as soon as we parted. I did not go to hear him—this was a fault—but we met in the evening at Bridgewater. The next day we had a long day's walk to Bristol, and sat down, I recollect, by a well-side on the road, to cool ourselves and satisfy our thirst, when Coleridge repeated to me some descriptive lines of his tragedy of "Remorse"; which I must say became his mouth and that occasion better than they, some years after, did Mr. Elliston's and the Drury-lane boards—

Oh memory! shield me from the world's poor strife,  
And give those scenes thine everlasting life.



I saw no more of him for a year or two, during which period he had been wandering in the Hartz Forest, in Germany; and his return was cometary, meteorous, unlike his setting out. It was not till some time after that I knew his friends Lamb and Southey. The last always appears to me (as I first saw him) with a commonplace book under his arm, and the first with a *bon-net* in his mouth. It was at Godwin's that I met him with Holcroft and Coleridge, where they were disputing fiercely which was the best—*Man as he was, or man as he is to be*. "Give me," says Lamb, "man as he is *not* to be." This saying was the beginning of a friendship between us, which I believe still continues. Enough of this for the present.

But there is matter for another rhyme,  
And I to this may add a second tale.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, "Hart-leap Well," 95-96.

## THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785-1859).

### THE GLORY OF MOTION.

(From "The English Mail-Coach," a series of papers which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1849.)

SOME twenty or more years before I matriculated at Oxford, Mr Palmer, at that time M.P. for Bath, had accomplished two things, very hard to do on our little planet, the Earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in comets—he had invented mail-coaches, and he had married the daughter of a duke. He was, therefore, just twice as great a man as Galileo, who did certainly invent (or, which is the same thing, discover) the satellites of Jupiter, those very next things extant to mail-coaches in the two capital pretensions of speed and keeping time, but, on the other hand, who did *not* marry the daughter of a duke.

These mail-coaches, as organised by Mr. Palmer, are entitled to a circumstantial notice from myself, having had so large a share in developing the anarchies of my subsequent dreams; an agency which they accomplished, 1st, through velocity, at that time unprecedented—for they first revealed the glory of motion; 2ndly, through grand effects for the eye between lamp-light and the darkness upon solitary roads; 3rdly, through animal beauty and power so often displayed in the class of horses selected for this mail service; 4thly, through the conscious presence of a central intellect, that, in the midst of vast distances—of storms, of darkness, of danger—overruled all obstacles into one steady

co-operation to a national result. For my own feeling, this post-office service spoke as by some mighty orchestra, where a thousand instruments, all disregarding each other, and so far in danger of discord, yet all obedient as slaves to the supreme *bater* of some great leader, terminate in a perfection of harmony like that of heart, brain, and lungs, in a healthy animal organisation. But, finally, that particular element in this whole combination which most impressed myself, and through which it is that to this hour Mr. Palmer's mail coach system tyrannises over my dreams by terror and terrific beauty, lay in the awful *political* mission which at that time it fulfilled. The mail-coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo.<sup>1</sup> These were the harvests that, in the grandeur of their reaping, redeemed the tears and blood in which they had been sown. Neither was the meanest peasant so much below the grandeur and the sorrow of the times as to confound battles such as these, which were gradually moulding the destinies of Christendom, with the vulgar conflicts of ordinary warfare, so often no more than gladiatorial trials of national prowess. The victories of England in this stupendous contest rose of themselves as natural *Te Deums* to heaven; and it was felt by the thoughtful that such victories, at such a crisis of general prostration, were not more beneficial to ourselves than finally to France, our enemy, and to the nations of all western or central Europe, through whose pusillanimity it was that the French domination had prospered.

The mail-coach, as the national organ for publishing these mighty events thus diffusively influential, became itself a spiritualised and glorified object to an impassioned heart; and naturally, in the Oxford of that day, *all* hearts were impassioned, as being all (or nearly all) in *early* man-

<sup>1</sup> Battles in which the English defeated the French, 1805, 1812, 1813, and 1815.

hood. In most universities there is one single college; in Oxford there were five-and-twenty, all of which were peopled by young men, the *élite* of their own generation; not boys, but men; none under eighteen. In some of these many colleges, the custom permitted the student to keep what are called "short terms"; that is, the four terms of Michaelmas, Lent, Easter, and Act, were kept by a residence, in the aggregate, of ninety-one days, or thirteen weeks. Under this interrupted residence, it was possible that a student might have a reason for going down to his home four times in the year. This made eight journeys to and fro. But, as these homes lay dispersed through all the shires of the island, and most of us disdained all coaches except his majesty's mail, no city out of London could pretend to so extensive a connection with Mr. Palmer's establishment as Oxford. Three mails, at the least, I remember as passing every day through Oxford, and benefiting by my personal patronage—viz., the Worcester, the Gloucester, and the Holyhead mail. Naturally, therefore, it became a point of some interest with us, whose journeys revolved every six weeks on an average, to look a little into the executive details of the system. With some of these Mr. Palmer had no concern; they rested upon bye-laws enacted by posting-houses for their own benefit, and upon other bye-laws, equally stern, enacted by the inside passengers for the illustration of their own haughty exclusiveness. These last were of a nature to rouse our scorn, from which the transition was not very long to systematic mutiny. Up to this time, say 1804, or 1805 (the year of Trafalgar), it had been the fixed assumption of the four inside people (as an old tradition of all public carriages derived from the reign of Charles II.), that they, the illustrious quaternion, constituted a porcelain variety of the human race, whose dignity would have been compromised by exchanging one word of civility with the three miserable delfware outsiders. Even to have kicked an outsider, might

have been held to attain the foot concerned in that operation; so that, perhaps, it would have required an act of parliament to restore its purity of blood. What words, then, could express the horror, and the sense of treason, in that case, which *had* happened, where all three outsiders (the trinity of Pariahs)<sup>1</sup> made a vain attempt to sit down at the same breakfast-table or dinner-table with the consecrated four? I myself witnessed such an attempt; and on that occasion a benevolent old gentleman endeavoured to soothe his three holy associates, by suggesting that, if the outsiders were indicted for this criminal attempt at the next assizes, the court would regard it as a case of lunacy, or *delirium tremens*, rather than of treason. England owes much of her grandeur to the depth of the aristocratic element in her social composition, when pulling against her strong democracy. I am not the man to laugh at it. But sometimes, undoubtedly, it expressed itself in comic shapes. The course taken with the infatuated outsiders in the particular attempt which I have noticed, was, that the waiter, beckoning them away from the privileged *salle à-manger*, sang out, "This way, my good men," and then enticed these good men away to the kitchen. But that plan had not always answered. Sometimes, though rarely, cases occurred where the intruders, being stronger than usual, or more vicious than usual, resolutely refused to budge, and so far carried their point, as to have a separate table arranged for themselves in a corner of the general room. Yet, if an Indian screen could be found ample enough to plant them out from the very eyes of the high table, or *dais*, it then became possible to assume as a fiction of law that the three delf fellows, after all, were not present. They could be ignored by the porcelain men, under the maxim, that objects not appearing, and not existing, are governed by the same logical construction.

<sup>1</sup> The lowest class of Hindus, below the four castes, hence synonym for outcast.

Such being, at that time, the usages of mail-coaches, what was to be done by us of young Oxford? We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insides themselves as often very questionable characters—were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignities? If our dress and bearing sheltered us, generally, from the suspicion of being “raff” (the name at that period for “snobs”), we really *were* such constructively, by the place we assumed. If we did not submit to the deep shadow of eclipse, we entered at least the skirts of its penumbra. The outside of the mail had its own incommunicable advantages. These we could not forego. The higher price we would willingly have paid, but not the price connected with the condition of riding inside; which condition we pronounced insufferable. The air, the freedom of prospect, the proximity to the horses, the elevation of seat—these were what we required; but, above all, the certain anticipation of purchasing occasional opportunities of driving.

Such was the difficulty which pressed us; and under the coercion of this difficulty, we instituted a searching inquiry into the true quality and valuation of the different apartments about the mail. We conducted this inquiry on metaphysical principles; and it was ascertained satisfactorily, that the roof of the coach, which by some weak men had been called the attics, and by some the garrets, was in reality the drawing-room; in which drawing-room the box was the chief ottoman or sofa; whilst it appeared that the *inside*, which had been traditionally regarded as the only room tenantable by gentlemen, was, in fact, the coal-cellar in disguise.

Great wits jump. The very same idea had not long before struck the celestial intellect of China. Amongst the presents carried out by our first embassy to that country was a state-coach. It had been specially selected as a personal gift by George III.; but the exact mode of using

it was an intense mystery to Pekin. The ambassador, indeed (Lord Macartney), had made some imperfect explanations upon this point; but, as his excellency communicated these in a diplomatic whisper, at the very moment of his departure, the celestial intellect was very feebly illuminated, and it became necessary to call a cabinet council on the grand state question, "Where was the emperor to sit?" The hammer-cloth happened to be unusually gorgeous; and partly on that consideration, but partly also because the box offered the most elevated seat, was nearest to the moon, and undeniably went foremost, it was resolved by acclamation that the box was the imperial throne, and for the scoundrel who drove, he might sit where he could find a perch. The horses, therefore, being harnessed, solemnly his imperial majesty ascended his new English throne under a flourish of trumpets, having the first lord of the treasury on his right hand, and the chief jester on his left. Pekin gloried in the spectacle; and in the whole flowery people, constructively present by representation, there was but one discontented person, and *that* was the coachman. This mutinous individual audaciously shouted, "Where am *I* to sit?" But the privy council, incensed by his disloyalty, unanimously opened the door, and kicked him into the inside. He had all the inside places to himself, but such is the rapacity of ambition, that he was still dissatisfied. "I say," he cried out in an extempore petition, addressed to the emperor through the window—"I say, how am *I* to catch hold of the reins?" "Anyhow," was the imperial answer; "don't trouble *me*, man, in my glory. How catch the reins? Why, through the windows, through the keyholes—*anyhow*." Finally, this contumacious coachman lengthened the check-strings into a sort of jury-reins, communicating with the horses; with these he drove as steadily as Pekin had any right to expect. The emperor returned after the briefest of circuits; he descended in great pomp from his throne, with the severest resolution never to renounce it. A

public thanksgiving was ordered for his majesty's happy escape from the disease of broken neck; and the state-coach was dedicated thenceforward as a votive offering to the god Fo, Fo—whom the learned more accurately called Fi, Fi.

A revolution of this same Chinese character did young Oxford of that era effect in the constitution of mail-coach society. It was a perfect French revolution; and we had good reason to say, *ça ira*.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it soon became *too* popular. The "public"—a well-known character, particularly disagreeable, though slightly respectable, and notorious for affecting the chief seats in synagogues—had at first loudly opposed this revolution; but when the opposition showed itself to be ineffectual, our disagreeable friend went into it with headlong zeal. At first it was a sort of race between us; and, as the public is usually from thirty to fifty years old, naturally we of young Oxford, that averaged about twenty, had the advantage. Then the public took to bribing, giving fees to horse-keepers, etc., who hired out their persons as warming-pans on the box-seat. *That*, you know, was shocking to all moral sensibilities. Come to bribery, said we, and there is an end to all morality, Aristotle's, Zeno's, Cicero's, or anybody's. And, besides, of what use was it? For *we* bribed also. And as our bribes to those of the public were as five shillings to sixpence, here again young Oxford had the advantage. But the contest was ruinous to the principles of the stables connected with the mails. This whole corporation was constantly bribed, rebribed, and often sub-rebribed; a mail-coach yard was like the hustings in a contested election; and a horse-keeper, ostler, or helper, was held by the philosophical at that time to be the most corrupt character in the nation.

There was an impression upon the public mind, natural enough from the continually augmenting velocity of the mail, but quite erroneous, that an outside seat on this class

<sup>1</sup> This will do. The refrain of a popular song of the French Revolution.



of carriages was a post of danger. On the contrary, I maintained that, if a man had become nervous from some gipsy prediction in his childhood, allocating to a particular moon now approaching some unknown danger, and he should enquire earnestly, "whither can I fly for shelter? Is a prison the safest retreat? or a lunatic hospital? or the British Museum?" I should have replied, "Oh, no; I'll tell you what to do. Take lodgings for the next forty days on the box of his majesty's mail. Nobody can touch you there. It is felony to stop the mail; even the sheriff cannot do that. And an *extra* touch of the whip to the leaders (no great matter if it grazes the sheriff) at any time guarantees your safety." In fact, a bedroom in a quiet house seems a safe enough retreat, yet it is liable to its own notorious nuisances—to robbers by night, to rats, to fire. But the mail laughs at these terrors. To robbers, the answer is packed up and ready for delivery in the barrel of the guard's blunderbuss. Rats again!—there *are* none about mail-coaches, any more than snakes in Von Troil's Iceland;<sup>1</sup> except, indeed, now and then a parliamentary rat, who always hides his shame in what I have shown to be the "coal-cellar." And as to fire, I never knew but one in a mail-coach, which was in the Exeter mail, and caused by an obstinate sailor bound to Devonport. Jack, making light of the law and the lawgiver that had set their faces against his offence, insisted on taking up a forbidden seat in the rear of the roof, from which he could exchange his own yarns with those of the guard. No greater offence was then known to mail-coaches; it was treason, it was *lesa majestas*, it was by tendency arson; and the ashes of Jack's pipe, falling amongst the straw of the hinder boot containing the mail-bags, raised a flame which (aided by the wind of our motion) threatened a revolution in the republic of letters. Yet even this left the sanctity of the box unviolated. In dignified

<sup>1</sup> A chapter in that book, entitled "Concerning Snakes in Iceland," contains only the words "There are no snakes in Iceland."

repose, the coachman and myself sat on, resting with benign composure upon our knowledge that the fire would have to burn its way through four inside passengers before it could reach ourselves.

No dignity is perfect which does not at some point ally itself with the mysterious. The connection of the mail with the state and the executive government—a connection obvious but yet not strictly defined—gave to the whole mail establishment an official grandeur which did us service on the roads, and invested us with seasonable terrors. Not the less impressive were those terrors, because their legal limits were imperfectly ascertained. Look at those turnpike gates; with what deferential hurry, with what an obedient start, they fly open at our approach! Look at that long line of carts and carters ahead, audaciously usurping the very crest of the road. Ah! traitors, they do not hear us as yet; but, as soon as the dreadful blast of our horn reaches them with proclamation of our approach, see with what frenzy of trepidation they fly to their horses' heads, and deprecate our wrath by the precipitation of their crane-neck quarterings.

Sometimes after breakfast his majesty's mail would become frisky; and in its difficult wheelings amongst the intricacies of early markets, it would upset an apple-cart, a cart loaded with eggs, etc. Huge was the affliction and dismay, awful was the smash. I, as far as possible, endeavoured in such a case to represent the conscience and moral sensibilities of the mail; and, when wildernesses of eggs were lying poached under our horses' hoofs, then would I stretch forth my hands in sorrow, saying (in words too celebrated at that time, from the false echoes of Marengo),<sup>1</sup> "Ah! wherefore have we not time to weep over you?" which was evidently impossible, since, in fact, we had not time to laugh over them. Tied to post-office allowance, in some cases of fifty minutes for eleven miles could the royal mail pretend to undertake the

<sup>1</sup> A battle in which Napoleon I. defeated the Austrians, 1800.

offices of sympathy and condolence? Could it be expected to provide tears for the accidents of the road? If even it seemed to trample on humanity, it did so, I felt, in discharge of its own more peremptory duties.

Upholding the morality of the mail, *à fortiori* I upheld its rights; as a matter of duty, I stretched to the uttermost its privilege of imperial precedency, and astonished weak minds by the feudal powers which I hunted to be lurking constructively in the charters of this proud establishment. Once I remember being on the box of the Holyhead mail, between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, when a tawdry thing from Birmingham, some "Tallyho" or "Highflyer," all flaunting with green and gold, came up alongside of us. What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and colour in this plebeian wretch! The single ornament on our dark ground of chocolate colour was the mighty shield of the imperial arms, but emblazoned in proportions as modest as a signet-ring bears to a seal of office. Even this was displayed only on a single panel, whispering, rather than proclaiming, our relations to the mighty state; whilst the beast from Birmingham, our green-and-gold friend from false, fleeting, perjured Brummagem, had as much writing and painting on its sprawling flanks as would have puzzled a decipherer from the tombs of Luxor.<sup>1</sup> For some time this Birmingham machine ran along by our side—a piece of familiarity that already of itself seemed to me sufficiently jacobinical. But all at once a movement of the horses announced a desperate intention of leaving us behind. "Do you see *that*?" I said to the coachman. "I see," was his short answer. He was wide awake, yet he waited longer than seemed prudent; for the horses of our audacious opponent had a disagreeable air of freshness and power. But his motive was loyal; his wish was, that the Birmingham conceit should be full-blown before he froze it. When *that* seemed right, he unloosed, or, to speak by a stronger word, he *sprang*, his known resources: he slipped

<sup>1</sup> In Egypt.

our royal horses like cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, after the affrighted game. How they could retain such a reserve of fiery power after the work they had accomplished, seemed hard to explain. But on our side, besides the physical superiority, was a tower of moral strength, namely, the king's name, "which they upon the adverse faction wanted." Passing them without an effort, as it seemed, we threw them into the rear with so lengthening an interval between us, as proved in itself the bitterest mockery of their presumption; whilst our guard blew back a shattering blast of triumph that was really too painfully full of derision,

The modern modes of travelling cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon *alien* evidence; as, for instance, because somebody *says* that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience, or upon the evidence of a result, as that actually we find ourselves in York four hours after leaving London. Apart from such an assertion, or such a result, I myself am little aware of the pace. But, seated on the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity. On this system the word was not *magna loquimur*, as upon railways, but *vivimus*. Yes, "*magna vivimus*"; we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realise our grandeurs in act, and in the very experience of life. The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubts impossible on the question of our speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed was not the product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first.

But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and its electric thrillings—kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. Nile nor Trafalgar has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up for ever; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse; the interagencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight solitudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking, when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot walloping of the boiler.

Thus have perished multiform openings for public expressions of interest, scenical yet natural, in great national tidings; for revelations of faces and groups that could not offer themselves amongst the fluctuating mobs of a railway station. The gatherings of gazers about a laurelled mail had one centre, and acknowledged one sole interest. But the crowds attending at a railway station have as little unity as running water, and own as many centres as there are separate carriages in the train.

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT  
(1784-1859).

A "NOW."

DESCRIPTIVE OF A HOT DAY.

(First published in *The Indicator*, 1819-1821.)

Now the rosy- (and lazy-) fingered Aurora, issuing from her saffron house, calls up the moist vapours to surround her, and goes veiled with them as long as she can; till Phœbus, coming forth in his power, looks everything out of the sky, and holds sharp, uninterrupted empire from his throne of beams. Now the mower begins to make his sweeping cuts more slowly, and resorts oftener to the beer. Now the carter sleeps a-top of his load of hay, or plods with double slouch of shoulder, looking out with eyes winking under his shading hat, and with a hitch upward of one side of his mouth. Now the little girl at her grandmother's cottage door watches the coaches that go by, with her hand held up over her sunny forehead. Now labourers look well resting in their white shirts at the doors of rural ale-houses. Now an elm is fine there, with a seat under it; and horses drink out of the trough, stretching their yearning necks with loosened collars; and the traveller calls for his glass of ale, having been without one for more than ten minutes; and his horse stands wincing at the flies, giving sharp shivers of his skin, and moving to and fro his

ineffectual docked tail; and now Miss Betty Wilson, the host's daughter, comes streaming forth in a flowered gown and ear-rings, carrying with four of her beautiful fingers the foaming glass, for which, after the traveller has drank it, she receives with an indifferent eye, looking another way, the lawful twopence. Now grasshoppers "fry," as Dryden says. Now cattle stand in water, and ducks are envied. Now boots, and shoes, and trees by the road-side, are thick with dust; and dogs, rolling in it, after issuing out of the water, into which they have been thrown to fetch sticks, come scattering horror among the legs of the spectators. Now a fellow who finds he has three miles further to go in a pair of tight shoes is in a pretty situation. Now rooms with the sun upon them become intolerable; and the apothecary's apprentice, with a bitterness beyond aloes, thinks of the pond he used to bathe in at school. Now men with powdered heads (especially if thick) envy those that are unpowdered, and stop to wipe them up hill, with countenances that seem to expostulate with destiny. Now boys assemble round the village pump with a ladle to it, and delight to make a forbidden splash and get wet through the shoes. Now also they make suckers of leather, and bathe all day long in rivers and ponds, and make mighty fishings for "tittle-bats." Now the bee, as he hums along, seems to be talking heavily of the heat. Now doors and brick-walls are burning to the hand; and a walled lane, with dust and broken bottles in it, near a brick-field, is a thing not to be thought of. Now a green lane, on the contrary, thick-set with hedge-row elms, and having the noise of a brook "rumbling in pebble-stone," is one of the pleasantest things in the world.

Now, in town, gossips talk more than ever to one another, in rooms, in door-ways, and out of window, always beginning the conversation with saying that the heat is overpowering. Now blinds are let down, and doors thrown open, and flannel waistcoats left off, and cold meat preferred to hot, and wonder

expressed why tea continues so refreshing, and people delight to sliver lettuces into bowls, and apprentices water door-ways with tin canisters that lay several atoms of dust. Now the water-cart, jumbling along the middle of the street, and jolting the showers out of its box of water, really does something. Now fruiterers' shops and dairies look pleasant, and ices are the only things to those who can get them. Now ladies loiter in baths; and people make presents of flowers; and wine is put into ice; and the after-dinner lounge recreates his head with applications of perfumed water out of long-necked bottles. Now the lounge, who cannot resist riding his new horse, feels his boots burn him. Now buck-skins are not the lawn of Cos.<sup>1</sup> Now jockeys, walking in great-coats to lose flesh, curse inwardly. Now five fat people in a stage-coach hate the sixth fat one who is coming in, and think he has no right to be so large. Now clerks in office do nothing but drink soda-water and spruce-beer, and read the newspaper. Now the old-clothesman drops his solitary cry more deeply into the areas on the hot and forsaken side of the street; and bakers look vicious; and cooks are aggravated; and the steam of a tavern-kitchen catches hold of us like the breath of Tartarus. Now delicate skins are beset with gnats; and boys make their sleeping companion start up, with playing a burning-glass on his hand; and blacksmiths are supercarbonated; and cobblers in their stalls almost feel a wish to be transplanted; and butter is too easy to spread; and the dragoons wonder whether the Romans liked their helmets; and old ladies, with their lappets unpinned, walk along in a state of dilapidation; and the servant maids are afraid they look vulgarly hot; and the author, who has a plate of strawberries brought him, finds that he has come to the end of his writing.

<sup>1</sup> A kind of fine muslin.



## GETTING UP ON COLD MORNINGS.

(First published in *The Indicator*, 1819-1821.)

An Italian author—Giulio Cordara, a Jesuit—has written a poem upon insects, which he begins by insisting, that those troublesome and abominable little animals were created for our annoyance, and that they were certainly not inhabitants of Paradise. We of the north may dispute this piece of theology; but, on the other hand, it is as clear as the snow on the house-tops, that Adam was not under the necessity of shaving; and that when Eve walked out of her delicious bower, she did not step upon ice three inches thick.

Some people say it is a very easy thing to get up of a cold morning. You have only, they tell you, to take the resolution; and the thing is done. This may be very true; just as a boy at school has only to take a flogging, and the thing is over. But we have not at all made up our minds upon it; and we find it a very pleasant exercise to discuss the matter, candidly, before we get up. This, at least, is not idling, though it may be lying. It affords an excellent answer to those who ask how lying in bed can be indulged in by a reasoning being—a rational creature. How? Why, with the argument calmly at work in one's head, and the clothes over one's shoulder. Oh—it is a fine way of spending a sensible, impartial half-hour.

If these people would be more charitable they would get on with their argument better. But they are apt to reason so ill, and to assert so dogmatically, that one could wish to have them stand round one's bed, of a bitter morning, and *lie* before their faces. They ought to hear both sides of the bed, the inside and out. If they cannot entertain themselves with their own thoughts for half-an-hour or so, it is not the fault of those who can.

Candid inquiries into one's decumbency, besides the

air my clean shirt;—linen gets very damp this weather."—"Yes, sir." Here another delicious five minutes. A knock at the door. "Oh, the shirt—very well. My stockings—I think the stockings had better be aired too."—"Very well, sir."—Here another interval. At length everything is ready, except myself. I now, continues our incumbent (a happy word, by-the-bye, for a country vicar)—I now cannot help thinking a good deal—who can?—upon the unnecessary and villainous custom of shaving: it is a thing so unmanly (here I nestle closer)—so effeminate (here I recoil from an unlucky step into the colder part of the bed).—No wonder that the Queen of France took part with the rebels against that degenerate King, her husband, who first affronted her smooth visage with a face like her own. The Emperor Julian never showed the luxuriancy of his genius to better advantage than in reviving the flowing beard. Look at Cardinal Bembo's picture—at Michael Angelo's—at Titian's—at Shakespeare's—at Fletcher's—at Spenser's—at Chaucer's—at Alfred's—at Plato's—I could name a great man for every tick of my watch.—Look at the Turks, a grave and otiose people.—Think of Haroun al Raschid and Bed-ridden Hassan.—Think of Wortley Montague, the worthy son of his mother, above the prejudice of his time.—Look at the Persian gentlemen, whom one is ashamed of meeting about the suburbs, their dress and appearance are so much finer than our own.—Lastly, think of the razor itself—how totally opposed to every sensation of bed—how cold, how edgy, how hard! how utterly different from anything like the warm and circling amplitude, which

Sweetly recommends itself  
Unto our gentle senses.

Add to this, benumbed fingers, which may help you to cut yourself, a quivering body, a frozen towel, and a ewer full of ice; and he that says there is nothing to oppose in all this, only shows that he has no merit in opposing it.

## MARY RUSSELL MITFORD (1786-1855).

### THE FIRST PRIMROSE.<sup>1</sup>

(First published in *The Lady's Magazine*, 1810-1822.)

MARCH 6TH.—Fine March weather: boisterous, blustering, much wind and squalls of rain; and yet the sky, where the clouds are swept away, deliciously blue, with snatches of sunshine, bright, and clear, and healthful, and the roads, in spite of the slight, glittering showers, crisply dry. Altogether, the day is tempting, very tempting. It will not do for the dear common, that win<sup>1</sup> mill of a walk; but the close, sheltered lanes at the bottom of the hill, which keep out just enough of the stormy air, and let in all the sun, will be delightful. Past our old house, and round by the winding lanes, and the workhouse, and across the lea, and so into the turnpike road again—that is our route for to-day. Forth we set, Mayflower<sup>2</sup> and I, rejoicing in the sunshine, and still more in the wind, which gives such an intense feeling of existence, and, co-operating with brisk motion, sets our blood and our spirits in a glow. For mere physical pleasure there is nothing, perhaps, equal to the enjoyment of being drawn in a light carriage against such a wind as this, by a blood-horse at his height of speed. Walking comes next to it; but walking is not quite so luxurious or so spiritual; not quite so much what one fancies of flying, or being carried above the clouds in a balloon.

<sup>1</sup> The country described in these essays is in Berkshire, in the neighbourhood of Reading.

<sup>2</sup> Her dog, a greyhound.

Nevertheless, a walk is a good thing ; especially under this southern hedge-row, where nature is just beginning to live again ; the periwinkles, with their starry blue flowers, and their shining, myrtle-like leaves, garlanding the bushes ; woodbines and elder-trees pushing out their small, swelling buds ; and grasses and mosses springing forth in every variety of brown and green. Here we are at the corner where four lanes meet, or rather where a passable road of stones and gravel crosses an impassable one of beautiful but treacherous turf, and where the small, white farm-house, scarcely larger than a cottage, and the well-stocked rick-yard behind, tell of comfort and order, but leave all unguessed the great riches of the master. How he became so rich is almost a puzzle ; for, though the farm be his own, it is not large ; and though prudent and frugal on ordinary occasions, Farmer Barnard is no miser. His horses, dogs, and pigs are the best kept in the parish—May herself, although her beauty be injured by her fatness, half envies the plight of his bitch Fly ; his wife's gowns and shawls cost as much again as any shawls or gowns in the village ; his dinner parties (to be sure they are not frequent) display twice the ordinary quantity of good things—two couples of ducks, two dishes of green peas, two turkey poults, two gammons of bacon, two plum-puddings ; moreover, he keeps a single-horse chaise, and has built and endowed a Methodist chapel. Yet is he the richest man in these parts. Everything prospers with him. Money drifts about him like snow. He looks like a rich man. There is a sturdy squareness of face and figure ; a good-humoured obstinacy ; a civil importance. He never boasts of his wealth, or gives himself undue airs ; but nobody can meet him at market or vestry without finding out immediately that he is the richest man there. They have no child to all this money ; but there is an adopted nephew, a fine, spirited lad, who may, perhaps, some day or other, play the part of a fountain to the reservoir.

Now turn up the wide road till we come to the open common, with its park-like trees, its beautiful stream, wandering and twisting along, and its rural bridge. Here we turn again, past that other white farm-house, half hidden by the magnificent elms which stand before it. Ah! richer dwell not there, but there is found the next best thing—an industrious and light-hearted poverty. Twenty years ago, Rachel Hilton was the prettiest and merriest lass in the country. Her father, an old gamekeeper, had retired to a village ale house, where his good beer, his social humour, and his black-eyed daughter, brought much custom. She had lovers by the score; but Joseph White, the dashing and lively son of an opulent farmer, carried off the fair Rachel. They married and settled here, and here they live still, as merrily as ever, with fourteen children of all ages and sizes, from nineteen years to nineteen months, working harder than any people in the parish, and enjoying themselves more. I would match them for labour and laughter against any family in England. She is a blithe, jolly dame, whose beauty has amplified into comeliness; he is tall, and thin, and bony, with sinews like whipcord, a strong, lively voice, a sharp, weather-beaten face, and eyes and lips that smile and brighten when he speaks into a most contagious hilarity. They are very poor, and I often wish them richer; but I don't know—perhaps it might put them out.

Quite close to farmer White's is a little ruinous cottage, whitewashed once, and now in a sad state of betweenity, where dangling stockings and shirts, swelled by the wind, drying in a neglected garden, give signal of a washerwoman. There dwells at present in single blessedness, Betty Adams, the wife of our sometimes gardener. I never saw any one who so much reminded me in person of that lady whom everybody knows, Mistress Meg Merrilees<sup>1</sup>—as tall, as grizzled, as stately, as dark, as gipsy-looking, bonneted and gowned like her prototype, and almost as oracular. Here

<sup>1</sup> See Scott, "Guy Mannering."

the resemblance ceases. Mrs. Adams is a perfectly honest, industrious, painstaking person, who earns a good deal of money by washing and charring, and spends it in other luxuries than tidiness—in green tea, and gin, and snuff. Her husband lives in a great family, ten miles off. He is a capital gardener—or rather he would be so, if he were not too ambitious. He undertakes all things, and finishes none. But a smooth tongue, a knowing look, and a great capacity of labour, carry him through. Let him but like his ale and his master, and he will do work enough for four. Give him his own way, and his full quantum, and nothing comes amiss to him.

Ah, May is bounding forward! Her silly heart leaps at the sight of the old place—and so in good truth does mine. What a pretty place it was—or rather, how pretty I thought it! I suppose I should have thought any place so where I had spent eighteen happy years. But it was really pretty. A large, heavy, white house, in the simplest style, surrounded by fine oaks and elms, and tall, massy plantations shaded down into a beautiful lawn by wild overgrown shrubs, bowery acacias, ragged sweet-briers, promontories of dog-wood, and Portugal laurel, and bays overhung by laburnum and bird-cherry; a long piece of water letting light into the picture, and looking just like a natural stream, the banks as rude and wild as the shrubbery, interspersed with broom, and furze, and bramble, and pollard oaks covered with ivy and honeysuckle; the whole enclosed by an old mossy park paling, and terminating in a series of rich meadows, richly planted. This is an exact description of the home which, three years ago, it nearly broke my heart to leave. What a tearing up by the root it was; I have pitied cabbage-plants and celery, and all transplantable things, ever since; though, in common with them, and with other vegetables, the first agony of the transportation being over, I have taken such firm and tenacious hold of my new soil, that I would not for the world be pulled up again, even to be restored to the old beloved ground.—not even if its beauty were un-

diminished, which is by no means the case; for in those three years it has thrice changed masters, and every successive possessor has brought the curse of improvement upon the place; so that between filling up the water to cure dampness, cutting down trees to let in prospects, planting to keep them out, shutting up windows to darken the inside of the house (by which means one end looks precisely as an eight of spades would do that should have the misfortune to lose one of his corner pips), and building colonnades to lighten the out, added to a general clearance of pollards, and brambles, and ivy, and honeysuckles, and park palings, and irregular shrubs, the poor place is so transmogrified, that if it had its old looking glass, the water, back again, it would not know its own face. And yet I love to haunt round about it; so does May. Her particular attraction is a certain broken bank full of rabbit burrows, into which she insinuates her long pliant head and neck, and tears her pretty feet by vain scratchings; mine is a warm, sunny hedge row, in the same remote field, famous for early flowers. Never was a spot more variously flowery: primroses yellow, lilac white, violets of either hue, cowslips, oxslips, arums, orchises, wild hyacinths, ground ivy, pansies, strawberries, heart's-ease, formed a small part of the Flora of that wild hedge-row. How profusely they covered the sunny open slope under the weeping birch, "the lady of the woods"—and how often have I started to see the early innocent brown snake, who loved the spot as well as I did, winding along the young blossoms, or rustling among the fallen leaves! There are primroses leaves already, and short, green buds, but no flowers; not even in that furze cradle so full of roots, where they used to blow as in a basket. No, my May, no rabbits! no primroses! We may as well get over the gate into the woody winding lane, which will bring us home again.

Here we are making the best of our , between the old  
 elms that arch so solemnly overhead, , and sheltered

even now. They say that a spirit haunts this deep pool—a white lady without a head. I cannot say that I have seen her, often as I have paced this lane at deep midnight, to hear the nightingales, and look at the glowworms—but there, better and rarer than a thousand ghosts, dearer even than nightingales or glowworms, there is a primrose, the first of the year; a tuft of primroses, springing in yonder sheltered nook, from the mossy roots of an old willow, and living again in the clear, bright pool. Oh, how beautiful they are—three fully blown, and two bursting buds! How glad I am I came this way! They are not to be reached. Even Jack Rapley's<sup>1</sup> love of the difficult and unattainable would fail him here: May herself could not stand on that steep bank. So much the better. Who could wish to disturb them? There they live in their innocent and fragrant beauty, sheltered from the storms, and rejoicing in the sunshine, and looking as if they could feel their happiness. Who would disturb them? Oh, how glad I am I came this way home!

### NUTTING.

(First published in *The Lady's Magazine*, 1819-1822.)

September 26th.—One of those delicious autumnal days, when the air, the sky, and the earth seemed lulled into a universal calm, softer and milder even than May. We sallied forth for a walk, in a mood congenial to the weather and the season, avoiding, by mutual consent, the bright and sunny common, and the gay highroad, and stealing through shady, unfrequented lanes, where we were not likely to meet anyone—not even the pretty family procession which in other years we used to contemplate with so much interest—the father, mother, and children, returning from the wheat-field, the little ones laden with bristling close-tied bunches of wheat-ears, their own gleanings, or a bottle and a basket

<sup>1</sup> A village boy, "always foremost in mischief."



which had contained their frugal dinner, whilst the mother would carry her babe, hushing and lulling it, and the father and an elder child trudged after with the cradle, all seeming weary and all happy. We shall not see such a procession as this to-day; for the harvest is nearly over, the fields are deserted, the silence may almost be felt. Except the wintry notes of the redbreast, nature herself is mute. But how beautiful, how gentle, how harmonious, how rich! the rain has preserved to the herbage all the freshness and verdure of spring, and the world of leaves has lost nothing of its midsummer brightness, and the harebell is on the banks, and the woodbine in the hedges, and the low furze, which the lambs cropped in the spring, has burst again into its golden blossoms.

All is beautiful that the eye can see; perhaps the more beautiful for being shut in with a forest-like closeness. We have no prospect in this labyrinth of lanes, cross-roads, mere cart-ways, leading to the innumerable little farms into which this part of the parish is divided. Uphill or down, these quiet woody lanes scarcely give us a peep at the world, except when, leaning over a gate, we look into one of the small enclosures, hemmed in with hedge-rows, so closely set with growing timber, that the meady opening looks almost like a glade in a wood; or when some cottage, planted at a corner of one of the little greens formed by the meeting of these crossways, almost startles us by the unexpected sight of the dwellings of men in such a solitude. I am sure if wood can entitle a country to be called *Le Bocage*, none can have a better right to the name. Even this pretty snug farm-house on the hillside, with its front covered with the rice vine, which goes wreathing up to the very top of the clustered chimney, and its sloping orchard full of fruit—even this pretty, quiet nest can hardly peep out of its leaves. Ah! they are gathering in the orchard harvest. Look at that young rogue in the old mossy apple-tree—that great tree, bending with the weight of its golden-rennets—see how

he pelts his little sister beneath with apples as red and as round as her own cheeks, while she, with her outstretched frock, is trying to catch them, and laughing and offering to pelt again as often as one bobs against her; and look at that still younger imp, who, as grave as a judge, is creeping on hands and knees under the tree, picking up the apples as they fall so deedly,<sup>1</sup> and depositing them so honestly in the great basket on the grass, already fixed so firmly and opened so widely, and filled almost to overflowing by the brown rough fruitage of the golden-rennet's next neighbour, the russeting; and see that smallest urchin of all, seated apart in infantine state on the turfy bank, with that toothsome piece of deformity, a crumpling, in each hand, now biting from one sweet, hard, juicy morsel, and now from another. Is not that a pretty English picture? And then, farther up the orchard, that bold, hardy lad, the eldest born, who has scaled (heaven knows how) the tall, straight upper branch of that great pear-tree, and is sitting there as securely and as fearlessly, in as much real safety and apparent danger, as a sailor on the top-mast. Now he shakes the tree with a mighty swing that brings down a pelting shower of stony bergamots, which the father gathers rapidly up, whilst the mother can hardly assist for her motherly fear—a fear which only spurs the spirited boy to bolder ventures. Is not that a pretty picture? And they are such a handsome family too, the Brookers. I do not know that there is any gipsy blood, but there is the true gipsy complexion, richly brown, with cheeks and lips so red, black hair curling close to their heads in short, crisp rings, white shining teeth—and such eyes!—That sort of beauty entirely eclipses your mere roses and lilies. Even Lizzy, the prettiest of fair children, would look poor and watery by the side of Willy Brooker, the

<sup>1</sup> "Deedly."—I am not quite sure that this word is good English; but it is genuine Hampshire, and is used by the most correct of female writers, Miss Austen. It means (and it is no small merit that it has no exact synonym) anything done with a profound and plodding attention, an action which engrosses all the powers of mind and body (*Miss Mitford's note*).

old or little personage who is picking up the apples with his small chubby hands, and filling the basket so orderly, next to his father the most useful man in the field. "Willy!" He hears without seeing; for we are quite hidden by the high hunk, and a spreading hawthorn bush that overtops it, though between the lower branches and the grass we have found a convenient peephole. "Willy!" The voice sounds to him like some fairy dream, and the black eyes are raised from the ground with sudden wonder, the long silky eyelashes thrown back till they rest on the delicate brow, and a deeper blush is burning on those dark cheeks, and a smile is dimpling about those scarlet lips. But the voice is silent now, and the little quiet boy, after a moment's pause, is gone coolly to work again. He is, indeed, a most lovely child. I think some day or another he must marry Lizzy; I shall propose the match to their respective mammas. At present the parties are rather too young for a wedding—the intended bridegroom being, as I should judge, six, or thereabout, and the fair bride barely five—but at least we might have a betrothment after the royal fashion—there could be no harm in that. Miss Lizzy, I have no doubt, would be as demure and coquettish as if ten winters more had gone over her head, and poor Willy would open his innocent black eyes, and wonder what was going forward. They would be the very Oberon and Titania of the village—the fairy king and queen.

Ah! here is the hedge along which the periwinkle wreathes and twines so profusely, with its evergreen leaves shining like the myrtle, and its starry blue flowers. It is seldom found wild in this part of England; but, when we do meet with it, it is so abundant and so welcome,—the very robin-redbreast of flowers, a winter friend. Unless in those unfrequent frosts which destroy all vegetation, it blossoms from September to June, surviving the last lingering crane's-bill, forerunning the earliest primrose, hardier even than the mountain daisy—peeping out from beneath the snow, looking

at itself in the ice, smiling through the tempests of life, and yet welcoming and enjoying the sunbeams. Oh, to be like that flower!

The little spring that has been bubbling under the hedge all along the hillside, begins, now that we have mounted the eminence and are imperceptibly descending, to deviate into a capricious variety of clear, deep pools and channels, so narrow and so choked with weeds, that a child might overstep them. The hedge has also changed its character. It is no longer the close, compact vegetable wall of hawthorn, and maple, and brier-roses, intertwined with bramble and woodbine, and crowned with large elms or thickly set saplings. No! the pretty meadow which rises high above us, backed and almost surrounded by a tall coppice, needs no defence on our side but its own steep bank, garnished with tufts of broom, with pollard oaks wreathed with ivy, and here and there with long patches of hazel overhanging the water. "Ah, there are still nuts on that bough!" and in an instant my dear companion, active and eager and delighted as a boy, has hooked down with his walking-stick one of the lissome hazel stalks, and cleared it of its tawny clusters, and in another moment he has mounted the bank, and is in the midst of the nuttury, now transferring the spoil from the lower branches into that vast variety of pockets which gentlemen carry about them, now bending the tall tops into the lane, holding them down by main force, so that I might reach them and enjoy the pleasure of collecting some of the plunder myself. A very great pleasure he knew it would be. I doffed my shawl, tucked up my flounces, turned my straw bonnet into a basket, and began gathering and scrambling—for, manage it how you may, nutting is scrambling work—those boughs, however tightly you may grasp them by the young, fragrant twigs and the bright, green leaves, will recoil and burst away; but there is a pleasure even in that: so on we go, scrambling and gathering with all our might and all our glee. Oh what an enjoyment!

All my life long I have had a passion for that sort of seeking which implies finding (the secret, I believe, of the love of field-sports, which is in man's mind a natural impulse)—therefore I love violeting—therefore, when we had a fine garden, I used to love to gather strawberries, and cut asparagus, and above all, to collect the filberts from the shrubberies: but this hedge-row nutting beats that sport all to nothing. That is a make-believe thing compared with this: there was no surprise, no suspense, no unexpectedness—it was as inferior to this wild nutting as the turning out of a bag fox is to unearthing the fellow, in the eyes of a staunch fox-hunter.

Oh what enjoyment this nut-gathering is! They are in such abundance, that it seems as if there were not a boy in the parish, nor a young man, nor a young woman—for a basket of nuts is the universal tribute of country gallantry; our pretty damsel Harriet has had at least half-a-dozen this season; but no one has found out these. And they are so full, too, we lose half of them from over-ripeness; they drop from the socket at the slightest motion. If we lose, there is one who finds. May is as fond of nuts as a squirrel, and cracks the shells and extracts the kernel with equal dexterity. Her white glossy head is upturned now to watch them as they fall. See how her neck is thrown back like that of a swan, and how her quick eye follows the rustling noise and her light feet dance and pat the ground, and leap up with eagerness, seeming almost sustained in the air, just as I have seen her, when Brush is beating a hedge-row, and she knows from his questing that there is a hare afoot. See, she has caught that nut just before it touched the water; but the water would have been no defence—she fishes them from the bottom, she delves after them amongst the matted grass, even my bonnet—how beggingly she looks at that! “Oh what a pleasure nutting is!—Is it not, May?” May tosses her graceful head as if she understood the question—“And we must go home now—must we not? But we

will come nutting again some time or other—shall we not, my May ?”

## A COUNTRY CRICKET-MATCH.

(First published in *The Lady's Magazine*, 1819-1822.)

I doubt if there be any scene in the world more animating or delightful than a cricket-match—I do not mean a set match at Lord's Ground for money, hard money, between a certain number of gentlemen and players, as they are called—people who make a trade of that noble sport, and degrade it into an affair of bettings, and hedgings, and cheatings, it may be, like boxing or horse-racing; nor do I mean a pretty *fête* in a gentleman's park, where one club of cricketing dandies encounter another such club, and where they show off in graceful costume to a gay marquee of admiring belles, who condescend so to purchase admiration, and while away a long summer morning in partaking cold collations, conversing occasionally, and seeming to understand the game—the whole being conducted according to ball-room etiquette, so as to be exceedingly elegant and exceedingly dull. No! the cricket that I mean is a real solid old-fashioned match between neighbouring parishes, where each attacks the other for honour and a supper, glory and half-a-crown a man. If there be any gentleman amongst them, it is well—if not, it is so much the better. Your gentleman cricketer is in general rather an anomalous character. Elderly gentlemen are obviously good for nothing; and your beaux are, for the most part, hampered and trammelled by dress and habit; the stiff cravat, the pinched-in-waist, the dandy-walk—oh, they will never do for cricket! Now, our country lads, accustomed to the flail or the hammer (your blacksmiths are capital hitters) have the free use of their arms; they know how to move their shoulders; and they can move their feet too—they can run; then they are so much better made, so much more athletic, and yet so much

liessonier—to use a Hampshire phrase, which deserves at least to be good English. Here and there, indeed, one meets with an old Etonian, who retains his boyish love for that game which formed so considerable a branch of his education; some even preserve their boyish proficiency, but in general it wears away like the Greek, quite as certainly, and almost as fast; a few years of Oxford, or Cambridge, or the continent, are sufficient to annihilate both the power and the inclination. No! a village match is the thing—where our highest officer—our conductor (to borrow a musical term) is but a little farmer's second son; where a day labourer is our bowler, and a blacksmith our long-stop; where the spectators consist of the retired cricketers, the veterans of the green, the careful mothers, the girls, and all the boys of two parishes, together with a few amateurs, little above them in rank, and not at all in pretension; where laughing and shouting, and the very ecstasy of merriment and good-humour prevail: such a match, in short, as I attended yesterday, at the expense of getting twice wet through, and as I would attend to-morrow, at the certainty of having that ducking doubled.

For the last three weeks our village has been in a state of great excitement, occasioned by a challenge from our north-western neighbours, the men of B., to contend with us at cricket. Now, we have not been much in the habit of playing matches. Three or four years ago, indeed, we encountered the men of S., our neighbours south-by-east, with a sort of doubtful success, beating them on our own ground, whilst they in the second match returned the compliment on theirs. This discouraged us. Then an unnatural coalition between a high-church curate and an evangelical gentleman-farmer drove our lads from the Sunday-evening practice, which, as it did not begin before both services were concluded, and as it tended to keep the young men from the ale-house, our magistrates had winked at if not encouraged. The sport, therefore, had languished

until the present season, when under another change of circumstances the spirit began to revive. Half-a-dozen fine active lads, of influence amongst their comrades, grew into men and yearned for cricket; an enterprising publican gave a set of ribands: his rival, mine host of the Rose, an out-door by profession, gave two; and the clergyman and his lay ally, both well-disposed and good-natured men, gratified by the submission to their authority, and finding, perhaps, that no great good resulted from the substitution of public-houses for out-of-door diversions, relaxed. In short, the practice recommenced, and the hill was again alive with men and boys, and innocent merriment; but farther than the riband matches amongst ourselves nobody dreamed of going, till this challenge—we were modest, and doubted our own strength. The B. people, on the other hand, must have been braggers born, a whole parish of gasconaders. Never was such boasting! such crowing! such ostentatious display of practice! such mutual compliments from man to man—bowler to batter, batter to bowler! It was a wonder they did not challenge all England. It must be confessed that we were a little astounded; yet we firmly resolved not to decline the combat; and one of the most spirited of the new growth, William Grey by name, took up the glove in a style of manly courtesy, that would have done honour to a knight in the days of chivalry.—“We were not professed players,” he said, “being little better than school-boys, and scarcely older; but, since they had done us the honour to challenge us, we would try our strength. It would be no discredit to be beaten by such a field.”

Having accepted the wager of battle, our champion began forthwith to collect his forces. William Grey is himself one of the finest youths that one shall see—tall, active, slender and yet strong, with a piercing eye full of sagacity, and a smile full of good humour—a farmer’s son by station, and used to hard work as farmers’ sons are now, liked by everybody, and admitted to be an excellent cricketer. He immediately



set forth to muster his men, remembering with great complacency that Samuel Long, a bowler *comme il y en a peu*, the very man who had knocked down nine wickets, had beaten us, bowled us out at the fatal return match some years ago at S., had luckily, in a remove of a quarter of a mile last Lady-day, crossed the boundaries of his old parish, and actually belonged to us. Here was a stroke of good fortune! Our captain applied to him instantly; and he agreed at a word. Indeed, Samuel Long is a very civilised person. He is a middle-aged man who looks rather old amongst our young lads, and whose thickness and breadth gave no token of remarkable activity; but he is very active, and so steady a player! so safe! We had half gained the match when we had secured him. He is a man of substance, too, in every way; owns one cow, two donkeys, six pigs, and geese and ducks beyond count—dresses like a farmer, and owes no man a shilling—and all this from pure industry, sheer day-labour. Note that your good cricketer is commonly the most industrious man in the parish; the habits that make him such are precisely those which make a good workman—steadiness, sobriety, and activity—Samuel Long might pass for the *beau idéal* of the two characters. Happy were we to possess him! Then we had another piece of good luck. James Brown, a journeyman blacksmith and a native, who, being of a rambling disposition, had roamed from place to place for half a dozen years, had just returned to settle with his brother at another corner of our village, bringing with him a prodigious reputation in cricket and in gallantry—the gay Lothario of the neighbourhood. He is said to have made more conquests in love and in cricket than any blacksmith in the county. To him also went the indefatigable William Grey, and he also consented to play. No end to our good fortune! Another celebrated batter, called Joseph Hearne, had likewise recently married into the parish. He worked, it is true, at the A. mills, but slept at the house of his wife's father in our territories. He also was sought and

found by our leader. But he was grand and shy; made an immense favour of the thing; courted courting and then hung back—"Did not know that he could be spared; had partly resolved not to play again—at least not this season; thought it rash to accept the challenge; thought they might do without him——" "Truly I think so too," said our spirited champion; "we will not trouble you, Mr. Hearne."

Having thus secured two powerful auxiliaries, and rejected a third, we began to reckon and select the regular native forces. Thus ran our list:—William Grey, 1.—Samuel Long, 2.—James Brown, 3.—George and John Simmons, one capital, the other so-so—an uncertain hitter, but a good fieldsman, 5.—Joel Brent, excellent, 6.—Ben Appleton—here was a little pause—Ben's abilities at cricket were not completely ascertained; but then he was so good a fellow, so full of fun and waggery! no doing without Ben. So he figured in the list, 7.—George Harris—a short halt there too! Slowish—slow but sure. I think the proverb brought him in, 8.—Tom Coper—oh, beyond the world, Tom Coper! the red-headed gardening lad, whose left-handed strokes send *her* (a cricket-ball, like that other moving thing, a ship, is always of the feminine gender), send her spinning a mile, 9.—Harry Willis, another blacksmith, 10.

We had now ten of our eleven, but the choice of the last occasioned some demur. Three young Martins, rich farmers of the neighbourhood, successively presented themselves, and were all rejected by our independent and impartial general for want of merit—*cricketal* merit. "Not good enough," was his pithy answer. Then our worthy neighbour the half-pay lieutenant, offered his services—he, too, though with some hesitation and modesty, was refused—"Not quite young enough" was his sentence. John Strong, the exceedingly long son of our dwarfish mason, was the next candidate—a nice youth—everybody likes John Strong—and a willing, but so tall and limp, bent in the middle—a thread-paper, six-feet high! We were all afraid that, in spite of his name,

his strength would never hold out. "Wait till next year, John," quoth William Grey, with all the dignified seniority of twenty speaking to eighteen. "Coper's a year younger," said John. "Coper's a foot shorter," replied William: so John retired: and the eleventh man remained unchosen, almost to the eleventh hour. The eve of the match arrived, and the post was still vacant, when a little boy of fifteen, David Willis, brother to Harry, admitted by accident to the last practice, saw eight of them out, and was voted in by acclamation.

That Sunday evening's practice (for Monday was the important day) was a period of great anxiety, and, to say the truth, of great pleasure. There is something strangely delightful in the innocent spirit of party. To be one of a numerous body, to be authorised to say *we*, to have a rightful interest in triumph or defeat, is gratifying at once to social feeling and to personal pride. There was not a ten-year old urchin or a septuagenary woman in the parish who did not feel an additional importance, a reflected consequence, in speaking of "our side." An election interests in the same way; but that feeling is less pure. Money is there, and hatred, and politics, and lies. Oh, to be a voter, or a voter's wife, comes nothing near the genuine and hearty sympathy of belonging to a parish, breathing the same air, looking on the same trees, listening to the same nightingales! Talk of a patriotic elector! Give me a parochial patriot, a man who loves his parish! Even we, the female partisans, may partake the common ardour. I am sure I did. I never, though tolerably eager and enthusiastic at all times, remember being in a more delicious state of excitement than on the eve of that battle. Our hopes waxed stronger and stronger. Those of our players who were present were excellent. William Grey got forty notches off his own bat; and that brilliant hitter, Tom Coper, gained eight from two successive balls. As the evening advanced, too, we had encouragement of another

sort. A spy, who had been despatched to reconnoitre the enemy's quarters, returned from their practising ground with a most consolatory report. "Really," said Charles Grover, our intelligence—a fine old steady judge, one who had played well in his day—"they are no better than so many old women. Any five of ours would beat their eleven." This sent us to bed in high spirits.

Morning dawned less favourably. The sky promised a series of deluging showers, and kept its word as English skies are wont to do on such occasions; and a lamentable message arrived at the head-quarters from our trusty comrade, Joel Brent. His master, a great farmer, had begun the hay-harvest that very morning, and Joel, being as eminent in one field as in another, could not be spared. Imagine Joel's plight! the most ardent of all our eleven! a knight held back from the tourney! a soldier from the battle! The poor swain was inconsolable. At last, one who is always ready to do a good-natured action, great or little, set forth to back his petition: and, by dint of appealing to the public spirit of our worthy neighbour and the state of the barometer, talking alternately of the parish honour and thunder-showers, of lost matches and sopped hay, he carried his point, and returned triumphantly with the delighted Joel.

In the meantime we became sensible of another defalcation. On calling over our roll, Brown was missing; and the spy of the preceding night, Charles Grover—the universal scout and messenger of the village, a man who will run half-a-dozen miles for a pint of beer, who does errands for the very love of the trade, who, if he had been a lord, would have been an ambassador—was instantly despatched to summon the truant. His report spread general consternation. Brown had set off at four o'clock in the morning to play in a cricket-match at M., a little town twelve miles off, which had been his last residence. Here was desertion! Here was treachery! Here was treachery against that goodly state, our parish! To send James

Brown to Coventry was the immediate resolution; but even that seemed too light a punishment for such delinquency. Then how we cried him down! At ten on Sunday night (for the rascal had actually practised with us, and never said a word of his intended disloyalty) he was our faithful mate, and the best player (take him for all in all) of the eleven. At ten in the morning he had run away, and we were well rid of him; he was no batter compared with William Grey or Tom Coper; not fit to wipe the shoes of Samuel Long, as a bowler; nothing of a scout to John Simmons; the boy David Willis was worth fifty of him—

I trust we have within our realm,  
Five hundred good as he,

was the universal sentiment. So we took tall John Strong, who, with an incurable hankering after the honour of being admitted, had kept constantly with the players, to take the chance of some such accident—we took John for our *pis-aller*. I never saw any one prouder than the good-humoured lad was of this not very flattering piece of preferment.

John Strong was elected, and Brown sent to Coventry; and when I first heard of his delinquency, I thought the punishment only too mild for the crime. But I have since learned the secret history of the offence (if we could know the secret histories of all offences, how much better the world would seem than it does now!) and really my wrath is much abated. It was a piece of gallantry, of devotion to the sex, or rather a chivalrous obedience to one chosen fair. I must tell my readers the story. Mary Allen, the prettiest girl of M., had, it seems, revenged upon our blacksmith the numberless inconsistencies of which he stood accused. He was in love over head and ears, but the nymph was cruel. She said no, and no, and no, and poor Brown, three times rejected, at last resolved to leave the place, partly in despair, and partly in that hope which often mingles strangely with a lover's despair, the hope that when he was gone he should be missed. He came home to his brother's accordingly;

but for five weeks he heard nothing from or of the inexorable Mary, and was glad to beguile his own "vexing thoughts" by endeavouring to create in his mind an artificial and factitious interest in our cricket-match—all unimportant as such a trifle must have seemed to a man in love. Poor James, however, is a social and warm-hearted person, not likely to resist a contagious sympathy. As the time for the play advanced, the interest which he had at first affected became genuine and sincere; and he was really, when he left the ground on Sunday night, almost as enthusiastically absorbed in the event of the next day as Joel Brent himself. He little foresaw the new and delightful interest which awaited him at home, where, on the moment of his arrival, his sister-in-law and confidante presented him with a billet from the lady of his heart. It had, with the usual delay of letters sent by private hands in that rank of life, loitered on the road, in a degree inconceivable to those who are accustomed to the punctual speed of the post, and had taken ten days for its twelve miles' journey. Have my readers any wish to see this *billet-doux*? I can show them (but in strict confidence) a literal copy. It was addressed,

"For mistur jem browne  
"blaxmith by  
"S."

The inside ran thus:—"Mistur browne this is to Inform you that oure parish plays bramley men next monday is a week, i think we shall lose without yew, from your humbell servant to command

"MARY ALLEN."

Was there ever a prettier relenting? a summons more flattering, more delicate, more irresistible? The precious epistle was undated; but, having ascertained who brought it, and found, by cross-examining the messenger, that the Monday in question was the very next day, we were not

surprised to find that *Missus Loune* forgot his engagement to us, forgot all but Mary and Mary's letter, and set off at four o'clock the next morning to walk twelve miles, and play for her parish, and in her sight. Really we must not send James Brown to Coventry—must we? Though if, as his sister-in-law tells our damsel Harriet he hopes to do, he should bring the fair Mary home as his bride, he will not greatly care how little we say to him. But he must not be sent to Coventry—True-love forbid!

At last we were all assembled, and marched down to H. common, the appointed ground, which, though in our dominions according to the maps, was the constant practising place of our opponents, and *terra incognita* to us. We found our adversaries on the ground as we expected, for our various delays had hindered us from taking the field so early as we wished; and, as soon as we had settled all preliminaries, the match began.

But, alas! I have been so long settling my preliminaries, that I have left myself no room for the detail of our victory, and must squeeze the account of our grand achievements into as little compass as Cowley, when he crammed the names of eleven of his mistresses into the narrow space of four eight-syllable lines. *They* began the warfare—those boastful men of B. And what think you, gentle reader, was the amount of their innings! These challengers—the famous eleven—how many did they get? Think! imagine! guess!—You cannot?—Well!—they got twenty-two, or, rather, they got twenty; for two of theirs were short notches, and would never have been allowed, only that, seeing what they were made of, we and our umpires were not particular.—They should have had twenty more if they had chosen to claim them. Oh, how well we fielded! and how well we bowled! our good play had quite as much to do with their miserable failure as their bad. Samuel Long is a slow bowler, George Simmons a fast one, and the change from Long's lobbing to Simmons's fast balls posed them com-

pletely. Poor simpletons! they were always wrong, expecting the slow for the quick, and the quick for the slow. Well, we went in. And what were our innings? Guess again!—guess! A hundred and sixty-nine! in spite of soaking showers, and wretched ground, where the ball would not run a yard, we headed them by a hundred and forty-seven; and then they gave in, as well they might. William Grey pressed them much to try another innings. “There was so much chance,” as he courteously observed, “in cricket, that advantageous as our position seemed, we might, very possibly, be overtaken. The B. men had better try.” But they were beaten sulky, and would not move—to my great disappointment; I wanted to prolong the pleasure of success. What a glorious sensation it is to be for five hours together—winning—winning! always feeling what a whist-player feels when he takes up four honours, seven trumps! Who would think that a little bit of leather, and two pieces of wood, had such a delightful and delighting power!

The only drawback on my enjoyment was the failure of the pretty boy, David Willis, who, injudiciously put in first, and playing for the first time in a match amongst men and strangers, who talked to him, and stared at him, was seized with such a fit of shamefaced shyness, that he could scarcely hold his bat, and was bowled out without a stroke, from actual nervousness. “He will come off that,” Tom Coper says—I am afraid he will. I wonder whether Tom had ever any modesty to lose. Our other modest lad, John Strong, did very well; his length told in fielding, and he got good fame. Joel Brent, the rescued mower, got into a scrape, and out of it again; his fortune for the day. He ran out his mate, Samuel Long; who, I do believe, but for the excess of Joel’s eagerness, would have stayed in till this time, by which exploit he got into sad disgrace; and then he himself got thirty-seven runs, which redeemed his reputation. William Grey made a hit which actually lost the cricket-ball. We think she lodged in a hedge, a quarter of



a mile off, but nobody could find her. And George Simmons had nearly lost his shoe, which he tossed away in a passion, for having been caught out, owing to the ball glancing against it. These, together with a very complete somerset of Ben Appleton, our long stop, who floundered about in the mud, making faces and attitudes as laughable as Grimaldi, none could tell whether by accident or design, were the chief incidents of the scene of action. Amongst the spectators nothing remarkable occurred, beyond the general calamity of two or three drenchings, except that a form, placed by the side of a hedge, under a very insufficient shelter, was knocked into the ditch, in a sudden rush of the cricketers to escape a pelting shower, by which means all parties shared the fate of Ben Appleton, some on land and some by water; and that, amidst the scramble, a saucy gipsy of a girl contrived to steal from the knee of the demure and well-appareled Samuel Long, a smart handkerchief which his careful dame had tied round it to preserve his new (what is the mincing feminine word?)—his new—inexpressibles, thus reversing the story of Desdemona, and causing the new Othello to call aloud for his handkerchief, to the great diversion of the company. And so we parted; the players retired to their supper, and we to our homes; all wet through, all good-humoured and happy—except the losers.

To day we are happy too. Hats, with ribands in them, go glancing up and down; and William Grey says, with a proud humility, "We do not challenge any parish; but if we be challenged, we are ready."

# WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863).

## ROUND ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

(From the "Round About Papers," first published in *The Cornhill Magazine*, 1861-1862.)

THE kindly Christmas tree, from which I trust every gentle reader has pulled a bonbon or two, is yet all aflame whilst I am writing, and sparkles with the sweet fruits of its season. You young ladies, may you have plucked pretty giftlings from it; and out of the cracker sugar-plum which you have split with the captain or the sweet young curate may you have read one of those delicious conundrums which the confectioners introduce into the sweetmeats, and which apply to the cunning passion of love. Those riddles are to be read at *your* age, when I dare say they are amusing. As for Dolly, Merry, and Bell, who are standing at the tree, they don't care about the love-riddle part, but understand the sweet-almond portion very well. They are four, five, six years old. Patience, little people! A dozen merry Christmas-mases more, and you will be reading those wonderful love-conundrums, too. As for us elderly folks, we watch the babies at their sport, and the young people pulling at the branches: and instead of finding bonbons or sweeties in the packets which *we* pluck off the boughs, we find enclosed Mr. Carnifex's review of the quarter's meat; Mr. Sartor's compliments, and little statement for self and the young gentlemen; and Madame de Sainte-Crinoline's respects to

He is gone, and as the dear boy vanishes through the door (behind which I see him perfectly), I too cast up a little account of our past Christmas week. When Bob's holidays are over, and the printer has sent me back this manuscript, I know Christmas will be an old story. All the fruit will be off the Christmas tree then; the crackers will have cracked off; the almonds will have been crunched; and the sweet-bitter riddles will have been read; the lights will have perished off the dark green boughs; the toys growing on them will have been distributed, fought for, cherished, neglected, broken. Ferdinand and Fidelia will each keep out of it (be still, my gushing heart!) the remembrance of a riddle read together, of a double-almond munched together, and the moiety of an exploded cracker. . . . The maids, I say, will have taken down all that holly stuff and nonsense

about the clocks, lamps, and looking-glasses, the dear boys will be back at school, fondly thinking of the pantomime fairies whom they have seen; whose gaudy gossamer wings are battered by this time; and whose pink cotton (or silk is it?) lower extremities are all dingy and dusty. Yet but a few days, Bob, and flakes of paint will have cracked off the fairy flower-bowers, and the revolving temples of adamantine lustre will be as shabby as the city of Pekin. When you read this, will Clown still be going on lolling his tongue out of his mouth, and saying, "How are you to-morrow?" To-morrow, indeed! He must be almost ashamed of himself (if that cheek is still capable of the blush of shame) for asking the absurd question. To-morrow, indeed! To-morrow the diffugient snows will give place to Spring; the snowdrops will lift their heads; Ladyday may be expected, and the pecuniary duties peculiar to that feast; in place of bonbons, trees will have an eruption of light green knobs; the whitebait season will bloom . . . as if one need go on describing these vernal phenomena, when Christmas is still here, though ending, and the subject of my discourse!

We have all admired the illustrated papers, and noted how boisterously jolly they become at Christmas time. What wassail-bowls, robin-redbreasts, waits, snow landscapes, bursts of Christmas song! And then to think that these festivities are prepared months before—that these Christmas pieces are prophetic! How kind of artists and poets to devise the festivities beforehand, and serve them pat at the proper time! We ought to be grateful to them, as to the cook who gets up at midnight and sets the pudding a-boiling which is to feast us at six o'clock. I often think with gratitude of the famous Mr. Nelson Lee—the author of I don't know how many hundred glorious pantomimes—walking by the summer wave at Margate, or Brighton perhaps, revolving in his mind the idea of some new gorgeous spectacle of faëry, which the winter shall see complete. He is like cook at midnight. He watches and thinks. He pounds the spark-

ling sugar of benevolence, the plums of fancy, the sweetmeats of fun, the figs of—well, the figs of fairy fiction, let us say, and pop: the whole in the seething cauldron of imagination, and at due season serves up the PANTOMIME.

Very few men in the course of nature can expect to see all the pantomimes in one season, but I hope to the end of my life I shall never forego reading about them in that delicious sheet of the *Times* which appears on the morning after Boxing-day. Perhaps reading is even better than seeing. The best way, I think, is to say you are ill, lie in bed, and have the paper for two hours, reading all the way down from Drury Lane to the Britannia at Hoxton. Bob and I went to two pantomimes. One was at the Theatre of Fancy, and the other at the Fairy Opera, and I don't know which we liked the best.

At the Fancy, we saw "Harlequin Hamlet, or Daddy's Ghost and Nunky's Pison," which is all very well—but, gentlemen, if you don't respect Shakspeare, to whom will you be civil? The palace and ramparts of Elsinore by moon and snowlight is one of Lutherbourg's finest efforts. The banqueting hall of the palace is illuminated: the peaks and gables glitter with the snow: the sentinels march blowing their fingers for the cold—the freezing of the nose of one of them is very neatly and dexterously arranged: the snow-storm rises: the winds howl awfully along the battlements: the waves come curling, leaping, foaming to shore. Hamlet's umbrella is whirled away in the storm. He and his two friends stamp on each other's toes to keep them warm. The storm spirits rise in the air, and are whirled howling round the palace and the rocks. My eyes! what tiles and chimney-pots fly hurtling through the air! As the storm reaches its height (here the wind instruments come in with prodigious effect, and I compliment Mr. Brumby and the violoncellos)—as the snow-storm rises (queek, queek, queek, go the fiddles, and then thrumpty thump comes a pizzicato movement in Bob Major, which sends a shiver

into your very boot-soles), the thunder-clouds deepen (bong, bong, bong, from the violoncellos). The forked lightning quivers through the clouds in a zig-zag scream of violins—and look, look, look! as the frothing, roaring waves come rushing up the battlements, and over the reeling parapet, each hissing wave becomes a ghost, sends the gun-carriages rolling over the platform, and plunges howling into the water again.

Hamlet's mother comes on to the battlements to look for her son. The storm whips her umbrella out of her hands, and she retires screaming in pattens.

The cabs on the stand in the great market-place at Elsinore are seen to drive off, and several people are drowned. The gas-lamps along the street are wrenched from their foundations, and shoot through the troubled air. Whist, rush, hish! how the rain roars and pours! The darkness becomes awful, always deepened by the power of the music—and see—in the midst of a rush, and whirl, and scream of spirits of air and wave—what is that ghastly figure moving hither? It becomes bigger, bigger, as it advances down the platform—more ghastly, more horrible, enormous! It is as tall as the whole stage. It seems to be advancing on the stalls and pit, and the whole house screams with terror, as the GHOST OF THE LATE HAMLET comes in, and begins to speak. Several people faint, and the light-fingered gentry pick pockets furiously in the darkness.

In the pitchy darkness, this awful figure throwing his eyes about, the gas in the boxes shuddering out of sight, and the wind instruments bugling the most horrible wails, the boldest spectator must have felt frightened. But hark! what is that silver shimmer of the fiddles? Is it—can it be—the grey dawn peeping in the stormy east? The ghost's eyes look blankly towards it, and roll a ghastly agony. Quicker, quicker ply the violins of Phoebus Apollo. Redder, redder grow the orient clouds. Cockadoodledoo! crows that great cock which has just come out on the roof of the palace.

"Harlequin Conqueror and the Field of Hastings," at the other house, is very pleasant too. The irascible William is acted with great vigour by Snoxall, and the battle of Hastings is a good piece of burlesque. Some trifling liberties are taken with history, but what liberties will not the merry genius of pantomime permit himself? At the battle of Hastings, William is on the point of being defeated by the Sussex Volunteers, very elegantly led by the always pretty Miss Waddy (as Haco Sharpshooter), when a shot from the Normans kills Harold. The fairy Edith hereupon comes forward and finds his body, which straightway leaps up a live harlequin, whilst the Conqueror makes an excellent clown, and the Archbishop of Bayeux a diverting pantaloon, &c. &c. &c.

Perhaps these are not the pantomimes we really saw; but one description will do as well as another. The plots, you see, are a little intricate and difficult to understand in pantomimes; and I may have mixed up one with another. That I was at the theatre on Boxing-night is certain—but the pit was so full that I could only see fairy legs glittering in the distance, as I stood at the door. And if I was badly off, I think there was a young gentleman behind me worse off

still. I own that he has good reason (though others have not) to speak ill of me behind my back, and hereby beg his pardon.

Likewise to the gentleman who picked up a party in Piccadilly, who had slipped and fallen in the snow, and was there on his back, uttering energetic expressions, that party begs to offer thanks, and compliments of the season.

Bob's behaviour on New Year's Day, I can assure Doctor Holyshade, was highly creditable to the boy. He had expressed a determination to partake of every dish which was put on the table; but after soup, fish, roast-beef, and roast-goose, he retired from active business until the pudding and mince-pies made their appearance, of which he partook liberally but not too freely. And he greatly advanced in my good opinion by praising the punch, which was of my own manufacture, and which some gentleman present (Mr. O'M—g—n, amongst others) pronounced to be too weak. Too weak! A bottle of rum, a bottle of Madeira, half a bottle of brandy, and two bottles and a half of water—*can* this mixture be said to be too weak for any mortal? Our young friend amused the company during the evening, by exhibiting a two-shilling magic lantern, which he had purchased, and likewise by singing "Sally, come up!" a quaint, but rather monotonous melody, which I am told is sung by the poor negro on the banks of the broad Mississippi.

What other enjoyments did we proffer for the child's amusement during the Christmas week? A great philosopher was giving a lecture to young folks at the British Institution. But when this diversion was proposed to our young friend Bob, he said, "Lecture? No, thank you. Not as I knows on," and made sarcastic signals on his nose. Perhaps he is of Doctor Johnson's opinion about lectures: "Lectures, sir! what man would go to hear that imperfectly at a lecture, which he can read at leisure in a book?" *I* never went, of my own choice, to a lecture: that I can vow.



As for sermons, they are different: I delight in them, and they cannot, of course, be too long.

Well, we partook of yet other Christmas delights besides pantomime, pudding, and pie. One glorious, one delightful, one most unlucky and pleasant day, we drove in a brougham, with a famous horse, which carried us more quickly and briskly than any of your vulgar railways, over Battersea Bridge, on which the horse's hoofs rang as if it had been iron; through suburban villages, plum-caked with snow; under a leaden sky, in which the sun hung like a red-hot warming-pan; by pond after pond, where not only men and boys, but scores after scores of women and girls, were sliding, and roaring, and clapping their lean old sides with laughter, as they tumbled down, and their hob-nailed shoes flew up in the air; the air frosty, with a lilac haze, through which villas, and commons, and churches, and plantations, glimmered. We drive up the hill, Bob and I: we make the last two miles in eleven minutes; we pass that poor armless man who sits there in the cold, following you with his eyes. I don't give anything, and Bob looks disappointed. We are set down neatly at the gate, and a horse-holder opens the brougham-door. I don't give anything; again disappointment on Bob's part. I pay a shilling apiece, and we enter into the glorious building, which is decorated for Christmas, and straightway forgetfulness on Bob's part of everything but that magnificent scene. The enormous edifice is all decorated for Bob and Christmas. The stalls, the columns, the fountains, courts, statues, splendours, are all crowned for Christmas. The delicious negro is singing his Alabama choruses for Christmas and Bob. He has scarcely done, when Tootarootatoo! Mr. Punch is performing his surprising actions, and hanging the beadle. The stalls are decorated. The refreshment tables are piled with good things; at many fountains "MULLED CLARET" is written up in appetising capitals. "Mulled Claret—oh, jolly! How cold it is!" says Bob. I pass on. "It's only three

o'clock," says Bob. "No, only three," I say meekly. "We dine at seven," sighs Bob, "and it's so-o-o coo-old." I still would take no hints. No claret, no refreshment, no sandwiches, no sausage-rolls for Bob. At last I am obliged to tell him all. Just before we left home, a little Christmas bill popped in at the door, and emptied my purse at the threshold. I forgot all about the transaction, and had to borrow half-a-crown from John Coachman to pay for our entrance into the Palace of Delight. *Now* you see, Bob, why I could not treat you on that second of January, when we drove to the Palace together; when the girls and boys were sliding on the ponds at Dulwich; when the darkling river was full of floating ice, and the sun was like a warming-pau in the leaden sky.

One more Christmas sight we had, of course; and that sight I think I like as well as Bob himself at Christmas, and at all seasons. We went to a certain garden of delight, where, whatever your cares are, I think you can manage to forget some of them, and muse, and be not unhappy; to a garden beginning with a Z., which is as lively as Noah's ark; where the fox has brought his brush, and the cock has brought his comb, and the elephant has brought his trunk, and the kangaroo has brought his bag, and the condor his old white wig, and black satin hood. On this day it was so cold that the white bears winked their pink eyes, as they plapped up and down by their pool and seemed to say, "Aha, this weather reminds us of dear home!" "Cold! bah! I have got such a warm coat," says Brother Bruin, "I don't mind;" and he laughs on his pole and clucks down a bun. The squealing hyænas gnashed their teeth, and laughed at us quite refreshingly at their window; and, cold as it was, Tiger, Tiger, burning bright, glared at us red-hot through his bars, and snorted blasts of hell. The woolly camel leered at us quite kindly as he paced round his ring on his silent pads. We went to our favourite places. Our dear wombat came up, and had himself scratched very

ably. Our fellow-creatures in the monkey-room held out their little black hands, and piteously asked us for Christmas alms. Those daring alligators on their rock winked at us in the most friendly way. The solemn eagles sat alone and scowled at us from their peaks; whilst little Tom Ratel tumbled over head and heels for us in his usual diverting manner. If I have cares on my mind, I come to the Zoo and fancy they don't pass the gate. I recognise my friends, my enemies, in countless cages. I entertained the eagle, the vulture, the old billy-goat, and the black-pated, crimson-necked, blear-eyed, baggy, hook-beaked old marabou stork yesterday at dinner; and when Bob's aunt came to tea in the evening, and asked him what he had seen, he stepped up to her gravely, and said—

"First I saw the white bear, then I saw the black,  
Then I saw the camel with a hump upon his back.

*Chorus of Children.*

Then I saw the camel with a hump upon his back!

Then I saw the grey wolf, with mutton in his maw;

Then I saw the wombat waddle in the straw;

Then I saw the elephant with his waving trunk,

Then I saw the monkeys—mercy, how unpleasantly they—  
smelt!"

There! No one can beat that piece of wit, can he, Bob? And so it is all over; but we had a jolly time, whilst you were with us, hadn't we? Present my respects to the Doctor; and, I hope, my boy, we may spend another merry Christmas next year.

## THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881).

### THE DEATH OF GOETHE.

(First published in *The New Monthly Magazine*, No. 138, 1832.)

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE<sup>1</sup> died at Weimar on the 22nd March, 1832. "It was about eleven in the morning, he expired," says the record, "without any apparent suffering, having a few minutes previously called for paper for the purpose of writing, and expressed his delight at the arrival of spring." A beautiful death; like that of a soldier found faithful at his post, and in the cold hand his arms still grasped! The Poet's last words are a greeting of the new-awakened Earth; his last movement is to work at his appointed task. Beautiful; what we might call a Classic sacred-death; if it were not rather an Elijah-translation—in a chariot not of fire and terror, but of hope and soft vernal sunbeams! It was at Frankfort, on Main, on the 28th of August, 1749, that this man entered the world; and now, gently welcoming the birthday of his eighty-second spring he closes his eyes and takes farewell.

So then our Greatest has departed. That melody of life, with its cunning tones, which took captive ear and heart, has gone silent; the heavenly force that dwelt here victorious over so much is here no longer; thus far, not farther, by speech and by act, shall the wise man utter him

<sup>1</sup> The greatest figure in German literature.

self forth. The End! What solemn meaning lies in that sound, as it peals mournfully through the soul when a living friend has passed away! All now is closed, irrevocable; the changeful life-picture, growing daily into new coherence, under new touches and hues, has suddenly become completed and unchangeable; there as it lay, it is dipped, from this moment, in the aether of the heavens, and shines transfigured, to endure even so—forever. Time and Time's Empire; stern, wide devouring, yet not without their grandeur! The week-day man, who was one of us, has put on the garment of Eternity, and become radiant and triumphant; the Present is all at once the Past, Hope is suddenly cut away, and only the backward vistas of Memory remain, shone on by a light that proceeds not from this earthly sun.

The death of Goethe, even for the many hearts that personally loved him, is not a thing to be lamented over; is to be viewed, in his own spirit, as a thing full of greatness and sacredness. For all men it is appointed once to die. To this man the full measure of a man's life had been granted, and a course and a task such as to only a few in the whole generations of the world; what else could we hope or require but that now he should be called hence, and have leave to depart, having finished the work that was given him to do? If his course, as we may say of him more justly than of any other, was like the Sun's, so also was his going down. For indeed, as the material Sun is the eye and revealer of all things, so is Poetry, so is the World-Poet in a spiritual sense. Goethe's life too, if we examine it, is well represented in that emblem of a solar Day. Beautifully rose our summer sun, gorgeous in the red fervid East, scattering the spectres and sickly damps (of both of which there were enough to scatter); strong, benignant in his noonday clearness, walking triumphant through the upper realms; and now, mark also how he sets! "So dies a hero; sight to be worshipped!"

And yet, when the inanimate material sun has sunk and disappeared, it will happen that we stand to gaze into the still-glowing west; and there rise great pale motionless clouds, like coulisses or curtains, to close the flame-theatre within; and then, in that death-pause of the Day, an unspeakable feeling will come over us; it is as if the poor sounds of Time, those hammerings of tired Labour on his anvils, those voices of simple men, had become awful and supernatural; as if in listening, we could hear them "mingle with the ever-pealing tone of old Eternity." In such moments the secrets of Life lie opener to us; mysterious things flit over the soul; Life itself seems holier, wonderful and fearful. How much more when our sunset was of a living sun; and *its* bright countenance and shining return to us, not on the morrow, but "no more again, at all, forever!" In such a scene, silence, as over the mysterious great, is, for him that has some feeling thereof, the fittest mood. Nevertheless by silence the distance is not brought into communion; the feeling of each is without response from the bosom of his brother. There are now, what some years ago there were not, English' hearts that know something of what those three words "Death of Goethe" mean; to such men, among their many thoughts on the event which are not to be translated into speech, may these few, through that imperfect medium, prove acceptable.

"Death," says the Philosopher, "is a commingling of Eternity with Time; in the death of a good man, Eternity is seen looking through Time." With such a sublimity here offered to eye and heart, it is not unnatural to look with new earnestness before and behind and ask, What space in those years and æons of computed Time, this man with his activity may influence; what relation to the world of change and mortality, which the earthly name Life, he who is even now called to the Immortals, has borne and may bear.

Goethe, it is commonly said, made a New Era in Literature; a Poetic Era began with him, the end or ulterior tendencies of which are yet nowise generally visible. This common saying is a true one; and true with a far deeper meaning than, to the most, it conveys. Were the Poet but a sweet sound and ringer, solacing the ear of the idle with pleasant songs; and the new Poet one who could sing his idle pleasant song to a new air,—we should account him a small matter, and his performance small. But this man, it is not unknown to many, was a Poet in such a sense as the late generations have witnessed no other; as it is, in this generation, a kind of distinction to believe in the existence of, in the possibility of. The true Poet is ever, as of old, the Seer; whose eye has been gifted to discern the godlike mystery of God's Universe, and decipher some new lines of its celestial writing: we can still call him a Vates and a Seer; for he sees into this greatest of secrets, "the open secret": hidden things become clear: how the Future (both resting on Eternity) is but another phasis of the Present; thereby are his words in very truth prophetic; what he has spoken shall be done.

It begins now to be everywhere surmised that the real Force, which in this world all things must obey, is Insight, Spiritual Vision and Determination. The Thought is parent of the Deed, nay is living soul of it, and last and continual as well as first mover of it, is the foundation and beginning and essence, therefore, of man's whole existence here below. In this sense, it has been said, the Word of man (the uttered Thought of man) is still a magic formula, whereby he rules the world. Do not the winds and waters, and all tumultuous powers, inanimate and animate, obey him? A poor, quite mechanical Magician speaks; and fire-winged ships cross the ocean at his bidding. Or mark, above all, that "raging of the nations" wholly in contention, desperation and dark chaotic fury; how the meek voice of a Hebrew Martyr and Redeemer stills it into order, and a

savage Earth becomes kind and beautiful, and the habitation of horrid cruelty a temple of peace. The true Sovereign of the world, who moulds the world like soft wax, according to his pleasure, is he who lovingly *sees* into the world; the "inspired Thinker" whom in these days we name Poet. The true Sovereign is the Wise Man.

However, as the Moon, which can heave up the Atlantic, sends not in her obedient billows at once, but gradually; and the Tide which swells to-day on our shores, and washes every creek, rose in the bosom of the great Ocean (astronomers assure us) eight-and-forty hours ago; and indeed all world-movements, by nature deep, are by nature calm, and flow and swell onwards, with a certain majestic slowness; so too with the Impulses of a Great Man, and the effect he has to manifest on other men. To such a one we may grant some generation or two, before the celestial Impulse he impressed on the world will universally proclaim itself, and become (like the working of the Moon) if still not intelligible yet palpable, to all men; some generation or two more, wherein it has to grow, and expand, and envelop all things, before it can reach its acme; and thereafter mingling with other movements and new impulses, at length cease to require a specific observation or designation. Longer or shorter such period may be, according to the nature of the Impulse itself, and of the elements it works in; according, above all, as the Impulse was intrinsically great and deep-reaching, or only wide-spread, superficial and transient.

But, as was once written, "though our clock strikes when there is a change from hour to hour, no hammer in the Horologue of Time peals through the Universe to proclaim that there is a change from era to era." The true Beginning is oftenest unnoticed and unnoticeable. The real new era was when a Wise Man came into the world, with clearness of vision and greatness of soul to accomplish this old high enterprise, amid these new difficulties, yet again: A Life of



Wisdom. Such a man became, by Heaven's pre-appointment, in very deed the Redeemer of the time. Did he not bear the curse of the time? He was filled full with its scepticism, bitterness, hollowness and thousandfold contradictions, till his heart was like to break; but he subdued all this, rose victorious over this, and manifoldly by word and act, showed others that came after how to do the like. Honour to him who first "through the impassable paves a road!"—Such, indeed, is the task of every great man; nay of every good man in one or the other sphere, since goodness is greatness, and the good man, high or humble, is even a martyr and "spiritual hero that ventures forward into the gulf for our deliverance."

Those volumes called "Goethe's Works" will now receive no farther addition or alteration; and the record of his whole spiritual Endeavour lies written there—were the man or men but ready that could read it rightly! A glorious record; wherein he who would understand himself and his environment, who struggles for escape out of darkness into light as for the one thing needful, will long thankfully study. For the whole chaotic time, what it has suffered, attained and striven after, stands imaged there; interpreted, ennobled into poetic clearness. From the passionate longings and wailings of Werter, spoken as from the heart of all Europe; onwards through the wild unearthly melody of Faust like the spirit-song of falling worlds; to that serenely smiling wisdom of Meister's Lehrjahre, and the German Hafiz—what an interval; and all enfolded in an ethereal music, as from unknown spheres, harmoniously uniting all! A long interval; and wide as well as long; for this was a universal man. History, Science, Art, human Activity under every aspect; the laws of Light in his *Farbenlehre*; the laws of wild Italian Life in his *Benvenuto Cellini*;—nothing escaped him; nothing that he did not look into, did not see into. Consider, too, the genuineness of whatsoever he did; his hearty idiomatic way: simplicity with loftiness,

and nobleness, and aerial grace ! Pure works of Art, completed with an antique Grecian polish, as Torquato Tasso, as Iphigenie : Proverbs, Xenien ; Patriarchal Sayings, which, since the Hebrew Scriptures were closed, we know not where to match ; in whose homely depths lie often the materials for volumes.

To measure and estimate all this, as we said, the time is not come, a century hence will be the fitter time. He who investigates it best will find its meaning greatest, and be the readiest to acknowledge that it transcends him. Let the reader have *seen* before he attempts to *oversee*. A poor reader in the meanwhile were he who discerned not here the authentic rudiments of that same New Era whereof we have so often had false warning. Wondrously, the wrecks and pulverized rubbish of ancient things, imstitutions, religions, forgotten noblenesses, made alive again by the breath of Genius, lie here in new coherence and incipient union, the spirit of Art working creative through the mass ; that chaos into which the eighteenth century with its wild war of hypocrites and sceptics had reduced the Past, begins here to be once more a *world*. This, the highest that can be said of written Books, is to be said of these ; there is in them a New Time, the prophecy and beginning of a New Time. The corner-stone of a new social edifice for mankind is laid there ; firmly, as before, on the natural rock : far-extending Traces of a ground-plan we can also see ; which future centuries may go on to enlarge, to amend and work into reality. These sayings seem strange to some ; nevertheless they are not empty exaggerations, but expressions, in their way, of a belief which is not now of yesterday ; perhaps when Goethe has been read and meditated for another generation they will not seem so strange.

Precious is the new light of Knowledge which our Teacher conquers for us ; yet small to the new light of Love which also we derive from him : the most important element of any man's performance is the Life he has ac-

complished. Under the intellectual union of man and man, which works by precept, lies a holier union of affection, working by example; the influence of which latter, mystic, deep-reaching, all-embracing, can still less be computed. For Love is ever the beginning of Knowledge, as fire is of light; and works also more in the manner of fire.

That Goethe was a great Teacher of men means already that he was a good man: that he had himself learned; in the school of experience had striven and proved victorious. To how many hearers, languishing, nigh dead, in the airless dungeon of Unbelief (a true vacuum and nonentity) has the assurance that there was such a man, that such a man was still possible, come like tidings of great joy! He who would also learn to reconcile reverence with clearness; to deny and defy what is False, yet believe and worship what is True; amid raging factions, bent on what is either altogether empty, or has substance in it only for a day, which stormfully convulse and tear hither and thither, a distracted, expiring system of society, to adjust himself aright; and working for the world and in the world, keep himself unspotted from the world—let him look here. This man, we may say, became morally great, by being in his own age, what in some other ages many might have been, a genuine man. His grand excellency was this, that he was genuine. As his primary faculty, the foundation of all others, was Intellect, depth and force of Vision, so his primary virtue was Justice, was the courage to be just. A giant's strength we admired in him; yet, strength ennobled into softest mildness, even like that "silent rock-bound strength of a world," on whose bosom, which rests on the adamant, grow flowers. The greatest of hearts was also the bravest; fearless, unwearied, peacefully invincible. A completed man: the trembling sensibility, the mild enthusiasm of a Mignon can assort with the scornful world mockery of a Mephistopheles: and each side of many-sided life receives its due from him.

Goethe reckoned Schiller happy that he died young, in the full vigour of his days; that we could "figure him as a youth for ever." To himself a different, higher destiny was appointed. Through all the changes of man's life, onward to its extreme verge, he was to go; and through them all nobly. In youth, flatterings of fortune, uninterrupted outward prosperity cannot corrupt him; a wise observer has to remark: "None but a Goethe at the Sun of earthly happiness, can keep his phoenix-wings unsinged."—Through manhood, in the most complex relation, as poet, courtier, politician, man of speculation; in the middle of revolutions and counter-revolutions outward and spiritual, with the world loudly for him, with the world loudly or silently against him; in all seasons and situations he holds equally on his way. Old age itself, which is called dark and feeble, he was to render lovely; who that looked upon him there, venerable in himself, and in the world's reverence ever the clearer, the purer, but could have prayed that he too were such an old man? And did not the kind Heavens continue kind, and grant to a career so glorious the worthiest end?

Such was Goethe's Life; such has his departure been. He sleeps now beside his Schiller, and his Carl August of Weimar: so had the Prince willed it, that between these two should be his own final rest. In life they were united, in Death they are not divided. The unwearied Workman now rests from his labours; the fruit of these is left growing and to grow. His earthly years have been numbered and ended; but of his activity, for it stood rooted in the Eternal, there is no end. All that we mean by the higher Literature of Germany, which is the higher Literature of Europe, already gathers round this man, as its creator; of which grand object, dawning mysterious on a world that hoped not for it, who is there that can measure the significance and far-reaching influences? The Literature of Europe will pass away: Europe itself, the Earth itself, will pass away: this little life-boat of an Earth, with its noisy crew of a Man-

kind, and all their troubled History, will one day have vanished; faded like a cloud-speck from the azure of the All! What, then, is man! What, then, is man! He endures but for an hour, and is crushed before the moth. Yet in the being and in the working of a faithful man is there already (as all faith, from the beginning, gives assurance) a something that pertains not to this wild death-element of Time; that triumphs over Time, and *is*, and will be, when Time shall be no more.

And now we turn back into the world, withdrawing from this new-made grave. The man whom we love lies there; but glorious, worthy; and his spirit yet lives in us with an authentic life. Could each here vow to do his little task, even as the Departed did his great one; in the manner of a true man, not for a Day, but for Eternity! To live, as he counselled and commanded, not commodiously, in the Reputable, the Plausible, the Half, but resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the True.

"Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren, resolut zu leben!"

DR. JOHN BROWN (1810-1882).

"WITH BRAINS, SIR."

(From "*Horæ Subsecivæ*," 1858-1861.)

"PRAY, Mr. Opie, may I ask what you mix your colours with?" said a brisk dilettante student to the great painter. "With *Brains*, Sir," was the gruff reply—and the right one. It did not give much of what we call information; it did not expound the principles and rules of the art; but, if the inquirer had the commodity referred to, it would awaken him; it would set him a-going, a-thinking, and a-painting to good purpose. If he had not the wherewithal, as was likely enough, the less he had to do with colours and their mixture the better. Many other artists, when asked such a question, would have either set about detailing the mechanical composition of such and such colours, in such and such proportions, rubbed up so and so; or perhaps they would (and so much the better, but not the best) have shown him how they laid them on; but even this would leave him at the critical point. Opie preferred going to the quick and the heart of the matter: "With *Brains*, Sir."

Sir Joshua Reynolds was taken by a friend to see a picture. He was anxious to admire it, and he looked it over with a keen and careful but favourable eye. "Capital composition; correct drawing; the colour, tone, chiaroscuro excellent; but—but—it wants, hang it, it wants—*That!*" snapping his fingers; and, wanting "that," though it had everything else, it was worth nothing.

Again, Etty was appointed teacher of the students of the Royal Academy, having been preceded by a clever, talkative, scientific expounder of aesthetics, who delighted to tell the young men *how* everything was done, how to copy this, and how to express that. A student came up to the new master, "How should I do this, Sir?" "Suppose you try." Another, "What does this mean, Mr. Etty?" "Suppose you look." "But I have looked." "Suppose you look again." And they did try, and they did look, and looked again; and they saw and achieved what they never could have done, had the *how* or the *what* (supposing this possible, which it is not in its full and highest meaning) been told them, or done for them; in the one case, sight and action were immediate, exact, intense, and secure; in the other mediate, feeble, and lost as soon as gained. But what are "*Brains*"? what did Opie mean? and what is Sir Joshua's "*That*"? What is included in it? and what is the use, or the need of trying and trying, of missing often before you hit, when you can be told at once and be done with it; or of looking when you may be shown? Everything in medicine and in painting—practical arts—as means to ends, let their scientific enlargement be ever so rapid and immense, depends upon the right answers to these questions.

First of all, "brains," in the painter, are not diligence, knowledge, skill, sensibility, a strong will, or a high aim,—he may have all these, and never paint anything so truly good or effective as the rugged woodcut we must all remember, of Apollyon bestriding the whole breadth of the way, and Christian girding at him like a man, in the old sixpenny *Pilgrim's Progress*; and a young medical student<sup>1</sup> may have zeal, knowledge, ingenuity, attention, a good eye and a steady hand—he may be an accomplished anatomist, stethoscopist, histologist, and analyst; and yet, with all this, and all the lectures, and all the books, and all the sayings, and all the preparations, drawings, tables, and

<sup>1</sup> The counsels given in this essay apply equally to all students.

other helps of his teachers, crowded into his memory or his notebooks, he may be beaten in treating a whitlow or a colic, by the nurse in the wards where he was clerk, or by the old country doctor who brought him into the world, and who listens with such humble wonder to his young friend's account, on his coming home after each session, of all he had seen and done,—of all the last astonishing discoveries and operations of the day. What the painter wants, in addition to, and as the complement of, the other elements, is *genius and sense*; what the doctor needs to crown and give worth and safety to his accomplishments, is *sense and genius*: in the first case, more of this, than of that; in the second, more of that, than of this. These are the "*Brains*" and the "*That*."

And what is genius? and what is sense? Genius is a peculiar native aptitude, or tendency, to any one calling or pursuit over all others. A man may have a genius for governing, for killing, or for curing the greatest number of men, and in the best possible manner: a man may have a genius for the fiddle, or his mission may be for the tight-rope, or the Jew's harp; or it may be a natural turn for seeking, and finding, and teaching truth, and for doing the greatest possible good to mankind; or it may be a turn equally natural for seeking, and finding, and teaching a lie, and doing the *maximum* of mischief. It was as natural, as inevitable, for Wilkie to develop himself into a painter, and such a painter as we know him to have been, as it is for an acorn when planted to grow up into an oak, a specific *quercus robur*. But *genius*, and nothing else, is not enough, even for a painter: he must likewise have *sense*; and what is *sense*? *Sense* drives, or ought to drive, the coach; *sense* regulates, combines, restrains, commands, all the rest—even the *genius*; and *sense* implies exactness and soundness, power and promptitude of mind.

Then for the young doctor, he must have as his main, his master faculty, *SENSE*—*Brains*—justness of mind, because



the subject-matter is one in which principle works, rather than impulse as in painting; the understanding has first to do with it, however much it is worthy of the full exercise of the feelings, and the affections. But all will not do, if genius is not there,—a real turn for the profession. It may not be a liking for it—one of the best of its practitioners never really liked it, at least liked other things better; but there must be a fitness of faculty of body and mind for its full, constant, exact pursuit. This sense and this genius, such a special therapeutic gift, had Hippocrates, Sydenham, Pott, Pinel, John Hunter, Delpech, Dupuytren, Keillie, Cheyne, Baulhe, and Abercrombie.<sup>1</sup> We might, to pursue the subject, pick out painters who had much genius and little or no sense, and vice versa, and physicians and surgeons, who had sense without genius, and genius without sense, and some perhaps who had neither, and yet were noticeable, and, in their own sideways, useful men.

But our great object will be gained if we have given our young readers (and these remarks are addressed exclusively to students) any idea of what we mean, if we have made them think, and look inwards. The noble and sacred science<sup>2</sup> you have entered on is large, difficult, and deep, beyond most others; it is every day becoming larger, deeper, and in many senses more difficult, more complicated and involved. It requires *more than the average* intellect, energy, attention, patience, and courage, and that singular but imperial quality, at once a gift and an acquirement, *presence of mind*,<sup>3</sup>—than almost any other department of human thought and action, except perhaps that of ruling men. Therefore it is, that we hold it to be of paramount importance that the parents, teachers, and friends of youths intended for medicine, and above all, that those who examine them on their entering on their studies, should at least (we might safely go much further) satisfy themselves as far as

<sup>1</sup> Distinguished physicians and surgeons.

<sup>2</sup> Used in the Greek sense to mean “nearness of the intelligence.”

<sup>3</sup> Medicine.

they can, that they are not below *par* in intelligence; they may be deficient and unapt, *quâ medici*, and yet, if taken in time, may make excellent men in other useful and honourable callings.

But suppose we have got the requisite amount and specific kind of capacity, how are we to fill it with its means; how are we to make it effectual for its end? On this point we say nothing, except that the fear now-a-days, is rather that the mind gets too much of too many things, than too little or too few. But this means of turning knowledge to action, making it what Bacon meant when he said it was power, invigorating the thinking substance—giving tone, and you may call it muscle and nerve, blood and bone, to the mind—a firm gripe, and a keen and sure eye: *that*, we think, is far too little considered or cared for at present, as if the mere act of filling in everything for ever into a poor lad's brain, would give him the ability to make anything of it, and above all, the power to appropriate the small portions of true nutriment, and reject the dregs.

One comfort we have, that in the main, and in the last resort, there is really very little that *can* be done for any man by another. Begin with the sense and the genius—the keen appetite and the good digestion—and, amid all obstacles and hardships, the work goes on merrily and well; without these we all know what a laborious affair, and a dismal, it is to make an incapable youth apply.

But it may be asked, how are the brains to be strengthened, the sense quickened, the genius awakened, the affections raised—the whole man turned to the best account for the cure of his fellow-men? How are you, when physics and physiology are increasing so marvellously, and when the burden of knowledge, the quantity of transferable information, of registered facts, of current names—and such names!—is so infinite: how are you to enable a student to take all in, bear up under all, and use it as not abusing it, or being abused by it? You must invigorate the containing and

sustaining mind, you must strengthen him from within, as well as fill him from without ; you must discipline, nourish, edify, relieve, and refresh his entire nature ; and how ? We have no time to go at large into this, but we will indicate what we mean :—encourage languages, especially French and German, at the early part of their studies ; encourage not merely the book knowledge, but the personal pursuit of natural history, of field botany, of geology, of zoology ; give the young, fresh, unforgetting eye, exercise and free scope upon the infinite diversity and combination of natural colours, forms, substances, surfaces, weights, and sizes—everything, in a word, that will educate their eye or ear, their touch, taste, and smell, their sense of muscular resistance ; encourage them by prizes, to make skeletons, preparations, and collections of any natural objects ; and, above all, try and get hold of their affections, and make them put their hearts into their work. Let them, if possible, have the advantage of a regulated *tutorial*, as well as the ordinary professional system. Let there be no excess in the number of classes and frequency of lectures. Let them be drilled in composition ; by this we mean the writing and spelling of correct, plain English (a matter not of every-day occurrence, and not on the increase),—let them be directed to the best books of the old masters in medicine, and *examined in them*,—let them be encouraged in the use of a wholesome and manly literature. We do not mean popular, or even modern literature—such as Emerson, Bulwer, or Alison, or the trash of inferior periodicals or novels—fashion, vanity, and the spirit of the age, will attract them readily enough to all these ; we refer to the treasures of our elder and better authors. If our young medical student would take our advice, and for an hour or two twice a week take up a volume of Shakspeare, Cervantes, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Cowper, Montaigne, Addison, Defoe, Goldsmith, Fielding, Scott, Charles Lamb, Macaulay, Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, Helps, Thackeray, &c., not to mention authors on deeper

and more sacred subjects—they would have happier and healthier minds, and make none the worse doctors. If they, by good fortune—for the tide has set in strong against the *literæ humaniores*—have come off with some Greek or Latin, we would supplicate for an ode of Horace, a couple of pages of Cicero or of Pliny once a month, and a page of Xenophon. French and German should be mastered either before or during the first years of study. They will never afterwards be acquired so easily or so thoroughly, and the want of them may be bitterly felt when too late.

But one main help, we are persuaded, is to be found in studying, and by this we do not mean the mere reading, but the digging into and through, the energizing upon, and mastering such books. Exertion quickens your pulse, expands your lungs, makes your blood warmer and redder, fills your mouth with the pure waters of relish, strengthens and supple your legs; and though on your way to the top you may encounter rocks, and baffling *débris*, and gusts of fierce winds rushing out upon you from behind corners, in all truly serious and honest books, difficulties and puzzles, winds of doctrine, and deceitful mists; still you are rewarded at the top by the wide view. You see, as from a tower, the end of all. You look into the perfections and relations of things. You see the clouds, the bright lights, and the everlasting hills on the far horizon. You come down the hill a happier, a better, and a hungrier man, and of a better mind. But, as we said, you must eat the book, you must crush it, and cut it with your teeth and swallow it; just as you must walk up, and not be carried up the hill, much less imagine you are there, or look upon a picture of what you would see were you up, however accurately or artistically done; no—you yourself must *do* both.

Philosophy—the love and the possession of wisdom—is divided into two things, science or knowledge; and a habit, or power of mind. He who has got the first is not truly wise unless his mind has reduced and assimilated it, as Dr.

Prout would have said, unless he appropriates and can use it for his need.

The prime qualifications of a physician may be summed up in the words *Cafax*, *Persficar*, *Sagax*, *Efficar*. *Cafax*—there must be room to receive, and arrange, and keep knowledge ; *Persficar*—senses and perceptions, keen, accurate, and immediate, to bring in materials from all sensible things ; *Sagax*, a central power of knowing what is what, and what it is worth, of choosing and rejecting, of judging ; and finally, *Efficar*—the will and the way—the power to turn all the other three—capacity, perspicacity, sagacity, to account, in the performance of the thing in hand, and thus rendering back to the outer world, in a new and useful form, what you have received from it. These are the intellectual qualities which make up the physician, without any one of which he would be *manus*, and would not deserve the name of a complete artsman, any more than proteine would be itself if any one of its four elements were amissing.

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